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LITERACY EXPERIENCES: AN EXPLORATION OF
YOUNG CHILDREN'S INTENTIONS, IDENTITIES,
AND AFFECTIVE RELATIONS IN EVERYDAY
ENCOUNTERS WITH TEXT

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Philosophy

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Abstract

Traditionally, in educational discourses early literacy development has tended to be thought of in terms of measurable learning outcomes. In this thesis, young children's encounters with written and multimodal texts are re-imagined as literacy experiences. The research adopted a cultural-historical theoretical framework, which blended the analytical concepts of activity settings, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity, and acknowledged new materialist perspectives, to generate a new conceptual lens to frame the literacy experience. Case studies of five 3-4-year-old children were documented over eight months in a nursery classroom and family homes using ethnographic data gathering methods. Observational data recorded through video and field notes were complemented by the perspectives of parents, nursery practitioners and of the children themselves.

Starting from the premise that literacy is socially constructed and culturally shaped, this study extends sociocultural perspectives by demonstrating that each encounter with text is also a unique and personal experience for the individual child. The findings reveal how the focal children's intentions with text were orientated toward three overarching aspirations; to make meaning, make relationships, and make identities. The study elucidates that in each literacy event, the children were in a continual process of configuring, expressing, and positioning themselves. Analysis of the dynamic, affective relations between the child, social others and the text suggests that children's interest in literacy may develop in anticipation of the experience afforded as well as in response to the opportunity to make meaning.

The conceptual space constructed in this thesis redirects the analytic lens to the relational, affective, social, material and highly personal processes involved in literacy. The study reveals that significant affective moments in children's encounters with text leave a residue. Thus, it is argued that practitioners need to be mindful of how their pedagogic practices impact on children's literacy experiences, and of the residual effect of affect.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with how 3-4-year-old children experience literacy through the multitude of texts they encounter in their play and everyday lives. The key focus is the affective relations between children and texts in different social situations, and how, in those relations children's intentions for, and identities around literacy take shape. Starting from the premise that literacy is socially constructed and culturally shaped, this research explores how social literacy events are personally and uniquely experienced by the individual child.

Young children's literacy development is an important issue for parents, early childhood teachers or practitioners, and for researchers; it is also on the agenda of politicians, policy makers, the media and producers of educational resources (Ellis, 2014). Yet, there is great diversity in thinking and vibrant debate about how children become literate, and about how children's literacy learning could, or should be measured (Perry, 2012; Ellis, 2014; Ellis and Moss, 2014). My initial aims for doctoral research were to investigate the varied ways in which young children participate in literacy-related activity prior to beginning formal education, and to do so in a way that did not attempt to measure children's literacy attainment. As argued by Thomson (2019), in educational policy, learning and attainment have come to mean the same thing, yet the complexities of children's learning cannot be reduced to a score. Despite measurable outcomes being purported in political dogma as evidence of 'what works' in education, I was inspired by the writings of Bozhovich, (2009) who argues that however much we measure standardised learning outcomes, it will not shed light on how learning was realised, which aspects of a particular learning environment bear influence, or the nature of the experience for the child. Similarly, Hedegaard (2018) argues that children's learning, or their cognitive development cannot be researched directly, what can be researched is children's participation in activity, and interpretations made about their learning.

Hence, this thesis offers a different perspective to research examining young children's literacy development, redirecting the analytic lens to how young children experience literacy. In this study, young children's literacy experiences are examined predominantly from a cultural-historical perspective. Although as this thesis will explicate, the theoretical framework was bespoke, constructed to direct the analytic lens to the activity of the individual child, whilst accounting for the relations and interplay of social, cultural and material influences.

A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

This thesis ensues sixteen years of professional practice at a nursery school, where my role included co-ordinating the setting's literacy provision. Alongside pre-doctoral study, my classroom experience led to my intense curiosity about young children's engagement with literacy, and simultaneously provoked my discontent with national policy, curriculum and assessment of young children's literacy development.

My reflections centred on how children's naturally occurring encounters with various forms of literacy in their play, oftentimes did not coalesce with the skills and knowledge I was required to assess. On the one hand, the provision was built upon general principles of emergent literacy (which will be discussed in chapter 2) and included literacy-related resources for children's volitional activity, such as a 'writing workshop', a well-resourced book corner, environmental print and comics and catalogues. In addition, practitioner-led group sessions included 'read-alouds' of picture-storybooks and music and singing activities, for example.

However, in 2012, concerns were raised by the Local Authority regarding the language and literacy development of children entering primary schools in the local area, and simultaneously there were revisions to the national Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (DfE, 2012), which placed greater emphasis on 'phonics' in the early literacy curriculum. This led to a decision at the nursery to implement a structured, phased programme comprising practitioner-led phonics teaching activities. The document, 'Letters and Sounds' (DfES, 2008), set out the Department for Education's vision of the principles and practices for the systematic teaching of phonics in England for children aged 3-7-years.

Subsequently, for two years, half of my working week was dedicated to small group teaching of phonics to 120 nursery aged children. In spite of my attempts to make the sessions fun and active, it soon became clear that the nursery had two literacy curricula running in parallel, but rarely intersecting. Children's literacy attainment, as assessed against statements in 'Early Years Outcomes' ¹(DfE, 2013) increased, but observations did not suggest children were generalising their phonic knowledge in their play activities involving texts. I became increasingly curious about the ways in which children spontaneously made meaning of familiar texts, and superimposed the actions, but not the knowledge, of the phonics groups, as illustrated in this brief anecdote from my practice.

¹ Early Years Outcomes is national guidance to support practitioners to help make 'best-fit' judgements about children's development for age, although non-statutory, use of the document was mandated by the local authority.

Daisy arrived at the nursery roleplay area where I had recently displayed some commercial logographic print. Her attention was immediately drawn to the logo for 'YouTube', and she stopped, looking at it intently for a moment. Using her index finger, she pointed to the print and traced it from left to right and said; "that says Harvey Kids TV" (a YouTube children's cartoon channel).

I found Daisy's interaction with the text fascinating, an amalgamation of actions that I modelled during the phonics sessions, with her established understanding of the familiar digital app icon. Reflection on such observations, combined with engagement with literature, fuelled my passion for early childhood literacy as a field of study, and in addition, led to a shift in my practice, in which the teaching of phonics was resourced with meaningful texts, in meaningful contexts. It was from this professional background that this research started. The journey of where it led will unfold over the following chapters.

LITERACY IN EARLY YEARS EDUCATIONAL POLICY, CURRICULUM, AND PRACTICE IN ENGLAND

Literacy learning has always taken centre stage in education policy; high levels of literacy are considered crucial to educational attainment, and to the wealth, health and well-being of individuals and the nation (Flewitt and Roberts-Holmes, 2015; Cremin and Flewitt, 2017). A report by the National Literacy Trust (Morrisroe, 2014), for example, asserts a direct link between literacy levels, academic attainment and social mobility. Hence, literacy learning has become highly politicised (Calfee, 2014); international comparative 'league tables' such as the 'Progress in International Reading Literacy Study' (PIRLS) heavily influence national policy, and in the drive to 'raise standards', has led to highly prescriptive, single approach literacy curricula in early years and primary education in England (Cremin and Flewitt, 2017). Currently the national literacy curriculum is dominated by a 'synthetic phonics' approach, of which detailed critiques have been presented by Clark (2013; 2017) and Ellis and Moss (2014) amongst others. However, this has not always been the case, since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988 (Education Reform Act, 1988), national policies and the specific approaches mandated for the teaching of literacy are sporadically amended, or indeed overhauled. Accordingly, the literacy outcomes that children are expected to achieve are also subject to change. Literacy education is a contested construct.

The current 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' (EYFS) (DfE, 2017), applicable to all provision for children from birth to age five in England, firstly speaks of 'guiding principles'. These values acknowledge the 'unique child', the importance of 'positive

relationships' and 'enabling environments' which respond to children's individual needs. The framework stresses that; 'children develop and learn in different ways [...] at different rates' (p.6). These principles suggest a progressive curriculum model in which practitioners can take a broad view of children's literacy development and a child-centred approach, building upon children's diverse experiences and interests. However, the document goes on to stipulate the level of attainment that children are expected to achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage, these are defined by Early Learning Goals, which for literacy state:

Reading: children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

Writing: children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible. (DfE, 2017, p.11)

These tightly framed goals reflect a print-based view of literacy, and position literacy as a mechanical process and a set of incremental skills. Referring to Broadhead's (2006) work, Daniels (2013) critiques the procedures for assessment of early literacy development, stating; 'it is a summative tool and therefore it does not deepen the educator's personal understanding of learning processes' (p.312). Hence, the early learning goals for literacy seem incompatible with the guiding principles of the EYFS, meaning that practitioners are receiving conflicting messages.

Such prescriptive curricula also mean that literacy education presents a very lucrative commercial opportunity in England. As Hall (2007) points out, producers of commercial programmes can give evidence to a parliamentary select committee, in support of a specific teaching method, without being obligated to declare any financial interest. Subsequently schools in England have been actively encouraged to buy highly structured commercial phonics programmes (Clark, 2017).

This matters for children, because this entanglement of social, political and commercial factors creates 'pedagogic structures' that directly influence how children participate in literacy both in early childhood settings (Daniels, 2016), and in homes. The National Curriculum, and its enactment in individual schools and settings, shapes how literacy is understood by children, and the wider community. Such tightly defined literacy outcomes may make it difficult for practitioners to incorporate broader understandings of literacy in their provision and practices (Levy, 2011). For example, Daniels' (2013) study found that practitioners' observations tended

to focus on documenting evidence of children's attainment, rather than capturing the more complex literacy processes children engaged in.

The view of literacy presented in policy and curriculum (at any point in time) risks becoming widely established in dominant cultural discourses as 'normative', and children who do not achieve the required attainment level at the expected age, may be considered 'delayed'. Not only does this impact on the individual child, but when national statistics compare the attainment levels of children from distinct racial, ethnic, social, economic and gender groups, sometimes sensationalised in the media, deficit views emerge, with children labelled 'at risk' simply because of their heritage or circumstances into which they are born (Larson and Marsh, 2015; Bradbury, 2014). Nutbrown, Hannon and Morgan (2005) add that schooled literacy is too often, articulated in an overly complex manner, 5-year-olds are taught terminology such as 'digraph', which risks alienating some parents from their children's learning, creating an educational system more accessible to some parents than others, meaning that, metaphorically speaking, the rich get richer (Comber, 2014).

Schools, it seems, are positioned at the centre of children's literacy learning, yet conversely, evidence from large-scale, longitudinal studies, such as 'The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project' (Sylva et al., 2004), and data from the 'Millennium Cohort Study' (Hartas, 2011) found that the home environment exerts a stronger influence on children's literacy attainment than schooling.

The importance of a 'literacy rich' home environment and, in particular, parent-child shared book reading in children's development are well documented (e.g. Barnes and Puccioni, 2017; Robertson and Reece, 2017; Gilkerson, Richards and Topping, 2017). Family literacy practices, however, have a greater reach than sharing books, and encompass the multitude of activities in which texts, of some kind or other, are an integral part of everyday life (Nutbrown et al., 2017). Furthermore, literacies are not confined to home and school environments, multimodal environmental text is ubiquitous in western societies. Many children's earliest understandings of text are often through commercial logographic print, encountered through a range of media (Neumann et al., 2013; Neumann et al., 2015). Texts relating to popular culture, for example are an integral part of family and community life (Pahl, 2005) and as Marsh (2013) states; "many children are able to play with, watch, listen to, eat, wear and sleep on texts and artefacts which are linked to their favourite characters" (p.209).

What is clear from research is that children's home and community environments have a powerful impact on children's literacies both in and out of school. While there are claims that literacy attainment levels tend to be intergenerational (Swain et al., 2014), other scholars have challenged these views. Levy's (2018) study of parent and child reading in homes found that

parents who reported themselves to be poor readers went on to have enjoyable reading relationships with their children. Hannon (2000) strongly questions the rhetoric surrounding family literacy, stressing the plurality of factors, and that parental literacy level alone cannot accurately identify children at risk of difficulties; similarly, Evangelou, Brookes and Smith (2007) suggest that it is impossible to unpick the factors which weave together to lead to levels of literacy attainment and educational outcomes.

Hence, many literacy scholars call for school literacy curricula that value and build upon children's social practices (e.g. Marsh, 2003; Levy, 2008; Cremin et al., 2014); the argument is summarised by Genishi and Dyson (2009), who state:

[T]he shifts in policy that have led to constraining curricula need revision and re-envisioning that take into account child learners' individual histories and what they are able to do in and out of the classroom. Narrow visions need to be replaced with complex scenes that are spacious enough for children's diverse ways of being, within a time frame and on curricula terrain that expands way beyond adult prescription. (p. 9-10)

National policies, curricula and school teaching practices directly influence not only children's literacy attainment in national and international tests, but also shape the sort of literacy practices that are valued and how children understand, experience, and participate in literacy.

RESEARCH RATIONALE AND OVERARCHING AIM

The notion of experiencing literacy is therefore at the heart of this qualitative and highly interpretive inquiry. Taking a multiple case-study approach, the activity of five 3-4-year-old children were observed over eight months in their nursery and home environments, and to a lesser extent, in community spaces such as the library and supermarket. My observations sought insight into how children's experiences manifested in ordinary, yet extraordinary everyday events. The notion of a literacy experience was theoretically framed through cultural-historical concepts and was investigated through 'domains' or 'strands' of inquiry, that were generated through engagement with literature and through a short pilot study, as will be detailed in the following chapters. Thus, the overarching aim of the research was;

'To investigate young children's literacy experiences through juxtaposing their intentions, identities and affective relations in literacy events.'

However, to study experience of a complex social practice such as literacy, it is firstly necessary to define it, and set parameters around the phenomena under study.

DEFINING LITERACIES

Literacy is a relatively recent term, which only came into popular use with the introduction of the national literacy strategy in 1997 (Nutbrown et al., 2017), and at that time, the term was tightly associated with reading and writing using an alphabetic script (Burnett and Merchant, 2018). More recently, the term 'literacy' has been used metaphorically (Barton, 2007) to indicate a level of competence, or ability to understand various concepts, for example, emotional literacy, computer literacy or financial literacy. However, such dispersed definitions can be unhelpful, creating ambiguity (Kress, 2010) and hence, it is necessary in literacy research, and indeed policy and practice documents, to ensure 'literacy' is well-defined, and to clarify the phenomena under study or discussion.

More conventional understandings, which limit literacy to meaning the ability to decipher alphabetic scripts, are also potentially problematic (Larson and Marsh, 2015). Languages, and their written scripts are diverse, and whilst in English, broadly and simply speaking, the relationship between spoken and written language is phonographic, not all languages function in this manner (Burnett and Merchant, 2018a), and where they do, phonographic relationships vary widely (Wyse and Goswami, 2008). Thus, definitions of literacy need to account for linguistic complexities and the symbol system through which written and spoken language are connected. Furthermore, it is necessary to account for the ways in which linguistic and non-linguistic modes are blended to carry meaning (Larson and Marsh, 2015), and therefore the plural term 'literacies' is now widely used to acknowledge the multiple semiotic modes humans use to express and convey meaning. Advances in technology mean that digitally based communication and information are increasingly multimodal (Burnett and Merchant, 2018a). The multimodality of text, discussed in chapter 2, is by no means a new phenomenon, however, synthesising written text, sound, and moving or still images is now taken for granted on most messaging or social media platforms and webpages, meaning that literacy is no longer dependent solely on a written script (Kress, 2010).

Research exploring distinct semiotic systems in texts offer novel insights into children's meaning-making. For example, Roche (2015) discussed how children 'read' picture books, arguing that illustrations are often multi-layered and develop more critical interpretations of a narrative. Yamada-Rice (2014) examined the meaning children construct from images in the environment, while Robinson and Mackey (2013) discuss the relationships between print and televisual literacies. Furthermore, Wohlwend (2011) argues that play can be conceptualised as a; "live action text" (p.2), an embodied creation or representation of meaning, thus, proposing that play, in itself, is a literacy.

In this thesis, I acknowledge these expansive views of text and literacy, which illustrate how children interweave numerous semiotic resources to understand their world. However, given the extent to which the concept of literacy is framed by National Curricula (DfE, 2013; DfE, 2017) as discussed earlier, young children's dramatic play and their engagement with images is unlikely to be widely recognised as literacy by early years practitioners. Hence, my intention is to explore early childhood literacy in a way that resonates with and is applicable to current early childhood curricula and practice in England. Therefore, definitions proposed by Heath and Street (2008) are applied in this study.

Heath and Street (2008) propose the singular term 'literacy' refers to; "written representations of oral (or gestural) language rendered in some script system that carries its own conventions and rules of usage" (p.4). The plural 'multimodal literacies' refers to; "systems of representation that include written forms that are combined with oral, visual or gestural modes" (p.4).

Thus, this research focused on examining children's activity with written texts, and multimodal texts that included a written element, although given the young age of the focal children, most observations involved the latter. However, heeding Spencer, Knobel and Lankshear (2013), who state; 'There is a danger, when studying children's 'out-of-school' literacy practices that the study focuses on literacies that will be valuable to children's development of school type literacy (p.144), I stress that confining the foci of this thesis to children's engagement with written and multimodal texts, does not attempt to link children's experiences to their school literacy attainment. Rather, the intention is to make the literacies I research, recognisable as such to early childhood practitioners.

THESIS STRUCTURE

Following on from this chapter's discussion of early literacy in educational policy, chapter 2 begins with a concise review of the history of research of early literacy learning and how, over time, different theoretical lenses have shaped thinking in the fields of emergent, and early childhood literacy. Principally, however, chapter 2 reviews literature in which literacy is construed as social practice (Heath, 1982; Street, 1995; Barton and Hamilton, 1998; 2000), with a particular focus on the seminal ethnographies of Anne Hass Dyson, whose work extensively illustrates the social and cultural nature of young children's literacies. Research addressing the nexus of literacy practices and identities is reviewed; followed by discussion of how new digital technologies, and the expanding scope for multimodality in text are expanding children's literacy practices. Finally, I summarise recent contributions of research and

conceptual literature adopting posthumanist perspectives in the field of literacy studies. Thus, chapter 2 illustrates the sociocultural position that children's literacies, and their associated identities, are socially co-constructed and culturally shaped; moreover, it identifies that scant attention has been paid in research to the personal experiences of individual children when engaged in social literacy practices.

Chapter 3 begins with a detailed synthesis of the work of contemporary scholars advancing Vygotskian concepts as tools for studying children's development. I debate how the theoretic concepts of '*activity settings*' (Bang, 2009; Hedegaard, 2012a), '*perezhivanie*' (Blunden, 2016; Veresov and Fleer, 2016) and '*subjective senses and configurations*' (Gonzales Rey, 2012; 2017) offer an analytic lens to understand the child's individual experience in the dynamic relations of social practices. The chapter reviews literature considering the unity of emotional and intellectual processes, exploring multiple conceptualisations of 'affect'. This leads to a synthesis of literature on the issue of children's interest and interests in literacy. The theory and research reviewed in this chapter sets out the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis.

Chapter 4 details the research methodology, providing a rationale for, and outline of the longitudinal case study design and the methods through which data were generated. I expand on how the overarching research aim, and specific research questions were constructed to speak to the gaps in literature identified in chapter 2, and were underpinned by the theoretical framework detailed in chapter 3. My own subjectivity, and the reflexivity through which it was addressed is discussed and I explain the ethical issues and considerations involved in researching with such young children. My aim in this chapter is to show congruencies between the research aims, the methodology and specific methods employed. Chapter 5 guides the reader through the analytic process through which thematic findings were derived from the data. I clarify and justify how established models of thematic analysis presented by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Saldaña (2016) were amalgamated. The four resultant themes are defined, and the study's validity is discussed.

Chapter 6 introduces the individual participant children through informal narrative accounts, constructed through synthesising observational data, and supplementary data reporting parents', practitioners', and children's own perspectives. The children's stories aim to give the reader a sense of who the children were, offering a glimpse into their characters, everyday lives and activities, and how these shaped their literacy experiences.

Chapter 7 presents four thematic findings. Each section comprises a brief introduction of the theme before presenting data portraits with analytic commentaries, which cumulate in a discussion. The data portraits incorporate video-still images, transcription and description,

intended to 'let the data speak for themselves' (Cohen et al., 2011), although researcher subjectivity is acknowledged. Analytic commentaries guide the reader through my analytic thinking and interpretation, which leads to a discussion of potential theoretical propositions, in relation to each theme. The chapter culminates in a debate about how juxtaposing the findings of each theme offers a potential lens to conceptualise the dimensions, and relationality of children's personal literacy experiences.

Finally, the conclusion explores how this research makes an original contribution to the field of early childhood literacy, discussing how the findings and conceptual space developed might contribute to early childhood policy, curriculum and practice. I consider the limitations of this study and suggest where it may be built upon in further research.

CHAPTER 2: EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY - THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH EVIDENCE

The previous chapter discussed the ways in which literacy is presented in policy and curriculum and how this shapes societal, practitioners' and indeed children's views. This chapter critically reviews and synthesises literature, both theoretical perspectives and research evidence; it aims to evaluate differing understandings of literacy and literacy learning in early childhood and to uncover where gaps in knowledge exist.

Initially broad search strategies were employed to surface relevant literature in the field of early childhood literacy. The university library database, library catalogue and Google Scholar were searched with keywords and author names, and key arguments assessed through critically reviewing relevant syntheses of current research and theoretical issues, such as in the *Sage Handbook of Early Childhood Literacy* (Larson and Marsh, 2013). Through electronic means, pertinent journals were identified and reviewed systematically such as *The Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* and *Reading Research Quarterly*. As literature was synthesised and gaps in knowledge uncovered, the strategy became more refined and involved following reference trails in pertinent contemporary journal articles. As the study evolved theoretically, these strategies were also employed to search for and review literature relating to cultural historical approaches to studying children; this literature is synthesised in chapter 3.

Thus, this chapter begins with a brief historical review of the field of early childhood literacy and discusses how different theoretical perspectives frame research, how these have evolved over time, and continue to do so. Largely however, it is an exploration of sociocultural theorisation and research in the field of early childhood literacy, and from such perspectives, the nexus of literacy and identity. Finally, contemporary literature advancing the field of study with more expansive views of literacy are debated.

EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY RESEARCH

The systematic study of early childhood literacy has a relatively short history. Until the 1920s, Teale (1995) argues, there was a 'benign neglect' of pre-school children's reading, until Gesell's theories of development, popular during the 1940s, asserted that cognitive development was a process of intrinsic growth controlled by stages of maturation (Saracho, 2017). This view underpinned the notion of 'reading readiness' which proposed that children were only ready

to learn to read when they reached the 'mental age' of 6 ½ years. A 'stimulating' preschool environment was endorsed, but one that "does not interfere with the predetermined process of spontaneous maturation" (Ausubel, 1961, p.19, cited by Teale, 1995). These early understandings of early childhood literacy were dominated by the field of clinical or developmental psychology, concerned with the cognitive processes involved in literacy, which as Rowe (2010) argues, viewed becoming literate as a universal process and locates literacy in the mind of the individual.

Between the 1970s and 1990s however, the emergent literacy perspective developed. Through observational studies, the seminal work of Clay (1975) and Goodman (1977) began to re-position literacy learning as a process that began in infancy. This work revealed that, through exposure to print and writing, children actively generated hypotheses about how the written language system worked; Harste, Woodward and Burke's (1984) research concluded that despite their unconventional form, young children's marks carried linguistic messages. It is not within the scope of this section to fully review the literature on emergent literacy, however, Teale's (1995) historical review of emergent literacy research highlighted the key propositions, as follows;

- children's early engagements with literacy are not 'pre' literate, but rather positioned on a continuum of the ongoing process of being literate.
- young children actively engage in reading and writing behaviours in informal situations in home, preschool and community settings.
- reading, writing and oral language develop concurrently.
- young children need to develop a broad range of knowledge, such as understandings about the functions and structure of literacy, print concepts, phonemic awareness as well as knowledge of letter-sound correspondence.
- children's journeys to more conventional reading and writing occur at different rates and through different routes.

The emergent literacy perspective positions literacy as an individual process affected by social forces. This shift in how literacy is theoretically positioned in research was noted by Rowe in (2009) who, focusing on early 'authoring' conducted a comprehensive review of 129 studies between 1990 and 2008. Rowe (2009) noted a chronological movement in the focus of research, from examining how children's early mark-making developed into conventional writing, toward detailed observation of young children's literacy practices. Rowe (2010) concisely summarised this shift in research focus as one that had progressed 'from convention to intention' and 'from intention to participation'. This concurrently represents a movement from literacy being thought of as an individual cognitive act, to an individual process affected

by social interaction, to more recent socio-cultural perspectives viewing literacy as a social practice that is culturally shaped.

This very brief historical review of literature highlights how literacy and literacy learning can be conceived of in multiple distinct ways, different lenses inevitably produce different views and no single all-encompassing theory can fully explain the complexities of the phenomena of literacy (Kress, 2003). As outlined in the introduction, it is from socio-cultural perspectives that my research and thesis have evolved, and it is research and conceptual literature taking sociocultural perspectives that are now reviewed in this chapter. The aim is to situate this thesis' research and justify the study's more specific 'cultural-historical' conceptual framework, which is reviewed in chapter 3.

SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY

Embedded in the broader seminal work of sociocultural scholars (e.g. Rogoff, 1995; 2003; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978; 1934 /1986; 1994) sociocultural theorisations of literacy contest the view of literacy learning as an accumulation of skills and knowledge, and rather hypothesise that; "children learn to read and write from the vantage point of the social positions they occupy and the types of participation that those roles afford." (Rowe, 2010, p. 137).

The notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation', introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) explicates how children 'grow into' the social literacy practices of their communities. This idea captures how a 'novice' or child develops competence in a social practice through participation at differing levels of involvement. Children come to know the literacy practices valued in their families and communities through firstly experiencing those practices from a more peripheral position, and gradually taking up fuller positions through more advanced participation. Accordingly, Rogoff (2003) defines learning as 'changing participation' in socially valued practices.

Scholars working with socio-cultural theoretical frameworks view literacy and literacy development as socially constructed and culturally and historically shaped, situating literacy as something that happens 'between people' (e.g. Barton and Hamilton, 2000; Street, 1984, 1995; Lankshear and Knobel, 2003). Advocating such perspectives, Lewis, Enciso and Moje (2007) state;

'sociocultural theories have refocused education research away from often well-intentioned, yet deficit-orientated, research agendas to research programs that

seek to understand the social and cultural practices of people from many different backgrounds and experiences' (p.3).

An established way to conceptualise the distinction between perspectives of literacy as an individual process and as a social practise is through Street's (1995) autonomous and ideological models of literacy. The autonomous model defines literacy as a set of discrete, neutral skills that can be universally applied in any situation in which written language requires decoding or encoding. The ideological model, in contrast defines literacy as social practice, inseparable from the context of use. Through his ethnographic research, Street (1993) asserted that literacy is not simply a set of technical skills, nor is it neutral, but rather is inextricably linked to social power. Issues of ethnicity, social class and gender permeate both the texts, and the literacy practices with which people engage. While autonomous and ideological views appear to be a dichotomy, Larson and Marsh (2015) propose that a continuum model provides a structure to position differing perspectives presented in research, policy, and curriculum documents. It is in sociocultural theories that the ideological model is anchored.

Thus, central to sociocultural perspectives, and to this study, is the concept of literacy practices and events (Heath, 1982; Street, 1995; Barton and Hamilton, 1998; 2000). Literacy practices are, in simple terms, what people and social groups do with written texts, in ways that are shaped by implicit values, local customs, social relationships and the purpose the text serves. Literacy events are explicitly observable episodes of literacy in use, or as Heath (1982) states; 'any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes' (p.50). The field of study which became known as New Literacy Studies, has taken the notion of literacy practices and events to render visible the ways in which literacies differ in different domains of daily life; family homes, schools, workplaces, community groups, social media, supermarkets, or online shopping, have distinct ways of using literacy. Hence, as culture, and the technologies of literacy evolve, so do literacy practices. These theoretical perspectives of literacy and literacy learning are explicated in the research reviewed below.

SOCIOCULTURAL LITERACY RESEARCH

It is in the expansive body of work of Dyson (e.g.1997; 1999; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2008; 2013) that early childhood literacy is most potently exhibited as social practice. Through extensive ethnographies, Dyson studied the literacy practices of children in the early grades of

elementary school, from a range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds in the United States. Dyson (ibid) illustrates how young children's personal literacies permeate the formal classroom curriculum, noting that, in teacher-mandated tasks, children appropriated the content, communicative forms, graphic conventions, voiced utterances and ideologies that they encountered through their out-of-school experiences with popular culture and sports media. For example, Dyson (2001) describes how one 6-year-old boy incorporated a character from a video game called 'Donkey Kong', alongside a character from a school text book, 'Little Bear' in his school writing task, creating a 'hybrid' text that spanned his home and school literacy practices. In a similar vein, Daniels (2014) studied a group of 5-year-old boys in an early childhood setting in the UK, revealing how they also exerted cultural agency, drawing on their personal and collective interests, developing their lines of enquiry to create collaborative texts. Dyson (1997) also highlighted that children not only reconstructed classroom writing tasks to incorporate their 'superhero' interest, but they also used their 'superhero' knowledge to position themselves and others within the peer group. Dyson noted how this was simultaneously liberating, enabling children to take up expert positions, but that it was also limiting, as stereotypes associated with 'superhero' popular culture also permeated the peer group. Drawing on the words of Nelson (2007), Dyson (2013) proposes that children's overriding motivations in social practices are to 'make meaning' and to 'make relationships', and authorship is a mediator of these pursuits.

Conceptualising literacy as social practice, something that happens 'between people' brings the notion of 'co-construction' to the fore. As Dyson's (ibid) work illustrates, children's school writing practices are 'co-constructed' by the child, the teacher (through mandated tasks) and peers, recent sociocultural research has demonstrated the co-construction of multiple aspects of literacy. For example, in a study of 2-year-olds' text making, Rowe (2008a; 2008b) illustrated how children's 'intentionality' was jointly negotiated and constructed in social interaction with adults. In addition, Rowe (ibid) points to the ways children's knowledge about writing and the writing process was collectively constructed in such interactions. A study of 3-5-year-olds' participation in 'Helicopter Stories' (Vivian Gussin Paley's approach to storytelling and story-acting) across six early childhood classrooms, (Cremin et al., 2018) reveals how children's stories were co-constructed in adult-child and peer interactions through complex orchestrations of verbal and embodied communicative modes. Maine (2013) argues that interaction between participants and the text creates a dialogic space in which meaning is co-constructed. Research examining adult / child shared book reading, a common literacy practice in western societies, suggests that, through social interaction, adult and child/ren co-construct complex and multi-layered interpretations of the narrative (Hoffman, 2011; Wiseman, 2011). Thus, the ways in which children produce texts, and the meaning they make when they

consume texts can be construed as 'co-constructed'. Moreover, young children's evolving understandings of literacy itself has been shown to be co-constructed through social participation in home, preschool and school contexts (Levy, 2011). As Goodman and Martens (2007) state; 'within these social cultural contexts children construct concepts about what literacy is, what it does, and how it positively or negatively impacts their lives' (p. ix - x).

Hence, through sociocultural research, the notion that literacy, and textual meaning making is a co-construction, is well established. The sociocultural turn in literacy research prompted a recognition that peoples' literacy practices, and the texts they produce and consume mediate their identities, and vice versa (McCarthy and Moje, 2002; Moje and Luke, 2009), hence, the literacy-identity nexus has become a persuasive strand of sociocultural literacy research.

THE LITERACY – IDENTITY NEXUS

Young children's understandings of 'self' as users of literacy, or their 'literate identities' can be thought of as integral to their literacy learning (Moje and Luke, 2009; Gee, 2000). 'Identity', however, is a broad and ambiguous term; in everyday usage, identity often refers to static personal characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, age, religion or nationality. Sociocultural perspectives, in contrast, position identity, like literacy as socially co-constructed.

This view of identity was theorised in the seminal work of Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998). These authors proposed that identities are constructed through; "practices and activities situated in historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally constructed worlds" (p.7). Identity, from this perspective, is positioned as continually under construction and always in flux as the dynamic relationship between who one is recognised as being, and who one perceives themselves to be, evolves and adapts in differing social and cultural contexts. Thus, whilst identities are constructed by and within the individual, it is not always in conditions of their own choosing, as Holland et al. (1998, p.170) state; "...we author the world. But the 'I' is by no means a free-wheeling agent." How a person is positioned by others can be influenced by dominant and powerful discourses relating to social class, institutional hierarchy, gender, age and ethnicity, for example, which can privilege some while limiting others. However, as Compton Lilly (2008) and Gee (2000) suggest, these positions may be accepted, negotiated or contested by the individual.

Conceptualising identities as plural and co-constructed through agentic participation in social practices is explicated in the notion of 'figured worlds', a concept proposed by Holland et al. (1998) within their theory of identity. The concept highlights the heuristic nature of identity

co-construction, positing that a person 'figures out' their relative position, their role, or where they fit in a particular social context or practice. Thus, children can make sense of the multiple worlds they inhabit, and throughout ongoing participation can reposition themselves. Hence, Holland and Lachicotte (2007) argue that identities are simultaneously social products and personal formations.

However, in a review of literacy and identity research, Moje and Luke (2009) noted subtle differences in how identity was perceived. They used five metaphors to describe the distinct, but overlapping conceptualisations; These were, 'Identity as; 1) difference; 2) sense of self / subjectivity; 3) mind or consciousness; 4) narrative; 5) position' (Moje and Luke, 2009, p.416). The way in which identity is conceptualised in research has implications for the assertions made about the literacy-identity nexus, thus it is not enough to simply state that a study has taken a sociocultural approach; it is crucial to be explicit about how identity is defined in research (Moje and Luke, 2009; Horta Nogueira, 2014).

Drawing attention to how an individual's identities are influenced by society, Gee (2000) theorised identity as; "being recognised as a certain 'kind of person' in a given context" (p.99). Prior to Moje and Luke's (2009) paper, Gee (2000) also identified distinctions between the ways in which identity has been viewed in research; 1) Nature-identity; 2) Institution-identity; 3) Discourse-identity; 4) Affinity-Identity, although Gee stressed the interrelationship, arguing that all four perspectives necessarily co-exist. For instance, Gee (2000) discusses how 'nature-identity' can only take on meaning through the way it is recognised; "through the work of institutions, discourse and dialogue, or affinity groups" (p.102). For example, ethnicity has no inherent bearing on a child's literacy practices, however, if one is recognised as part of an 'at risk' group and treated as such, ethnicity becomes a factor in one's literate identity. Institutional practices such as standardised assessments in early literacy education, position children in relation to the test; young children in England are assigned categories such as 'emerging, expected or exceeding' the standardised level. These 'institution-identities' ascribed to individuals are held in place only by the powerful discursive practices supporting them.

Gee (2000) emphasised that this model is one of many possible approaches to studying identity. However, it particularly illustrates the potential privilege and disadvantage that can be imposed upon a child when s/he is 'recognised' as a certain type of person. Whilst Gee acknowledges that the interpretation of one's identity traits can be challenged and negotiated, this model arguably though, does not adequately address an individual's agency or subjectivity in constructing their identities.

As the theoretical literature reviewed above shows, exploring the literacy – identity nexus in research is by no means straight forward, and research literature offers multiple, diverse perspectives.

Literacy and identities research

Much of the literacy and identity research has involved older children and teenagers which, as McCarthy and Moje (2002) suggest is; “in part because adolescents can be more metacognitive about their practices” (p.236), and such research with younger children can pose methodological challenges. Two studies reviewed in this section illuminate these challenges, however other researchers have used appropriate and creative methods and approaches to gain valuable insights into young children’s ever-evolving identities. For example, case-study research in the United States (Compton-Lilly, 2006) used multiple data sources to illustrate the convergence of identity, cultural resources and literacy learning of one 6-year-old boy, Devon, during his participation in a reading recovery programme. While initial data suggested he did not identify positively as a reader or writer, the study found that incorporating his interest and subject knowledge on ‘Pokémon’, and his skills at ‘rapping’ into the programme appeared to benefit his reading fluency and his reader identity. These cultural resources were powerful tools for identity construction and literacy learning. In addition, Devon expressed a belief that girls were more intelligent and more ‘liked’ by teachers, than boys, and appeared to position himself in relation to this conception. Compton-Lilly (2006) also noted the warm relationship that developed between Devon (an African American child in a predominantly white class), and an African American teaching student, questioning (but not drawing conclusions on), whether race was a factor in his identity as a reader.

Illustrating the contextualised nature of identity, another study investigated the literate identities of 4th grade children in USA and Canada (Beach and Ward, 2013), and compared and contrasted the stories told by children themselves, their parents, and their teachers. The research found that two children, described as ‘model’ pupils by the teacher, did the least reading and writing for pleasure or wider purposes in the home environment. These two children measured their own abilities against the grades they achieved in school, however in contrast, another participant, not recognised as a high achiever in school, talked with enthusiasm about sharing his own written stories with his younger siblings. However, I question the suitability of the study’s typological analysis, as the categories and sub-categories assigned had been developed for a different study 16 years previously, suggesting that data may have been made to fit pre-existing categories.

Exploring children's identities through the texts they produce, Rowsell and Pahl (2007) introduce the notion that children's identities are 'sedimented' in their texts. They argue that young children's texts are multimodal ensembles, comprising their oral compositions, their views on a subject, their thoughts on representational possibilities and strands of their personal histories, through which a child's identities are evident. Drawing on data from both authors' longitudinal ethnographic studies, they use illustrative examples. For instance, the paper describes one child's longstanding interest in birds, apparent in his play, his talk and in the models and pictures he produced in multiple contexts. The ethnographic data also revealed that the child's mother, in the family's home language referred to her sons as 'little birds' as a term of endearment. The authors posit that the child's unique lived experiences and multiple identities were sedimented into his bird themed texts. Another example discusses a child who routinely observed, then took up his father's literacy practice of reading commercial 'flyers'. This child, who had; "been considered at risk of failing literacy" (p.401), created his own versions of flyers at home, in which he demonstrated literacy skills akin to those required in school-based literacy. The concept of 'sedimented identities' foregrounds the discursive, social, cultural and intergenerational practices from which the children's texts evolve, as Rowsell and Pahl (2007) state; "every finished text has a history" (p.388).

In contrast to the longitudinal and ethnographic studies of Rowsell and Pahl (2007) and Compton-Lilly (2006), Laursen and Fabrin's research paper (2013) was built on data from one semi-structured focus group interview with three multilingual 7-8-year-olds, to examine their perspectives of reading and writing during their first year at school in Denmark. Data presented in the paper suggested the children's reader identities hinged on a, 'can' / 'cannot' dichotomy. When one child negatively positioned another child into the 'cannot' category, the second child took up the position despite the researcher attempting to produce evidence to the contrary. The first child, the oldest in the group, also described people who read a lot as 'nerds', he elaborated that; "a nerd is someone who wears glasses" and has "got ugly shoes" (Laursen and Fabrin, 2013, p.448). The children's accounts and self-positioning were, arguably, relative to the evolving conversation in an unusual, and possibly uneasy situation. It seems likely that had the group social dynamics been different, the children would have expressed quite different identity positions, which highlights firstly, the fluidity and highly contextualised nature of identity co-construction and secondly, how study design influences findings.

Another fundamental aspect of young children's literate identities is the way in which their perceptions of themselves as readers is intertwined with their evolving understandings of reading, as discussed by Levy (2008; 2011). The use of appropriate, 'child-orientated' interview activities in the study, facilitated by the use of puppets and 'small world' play props, elicited views directly from children in a nursery class (age 3-4-years) and a reception class (age 4-5-

years). The study found that some nursery children expressed much broader views of what reading entailed and thus, held more holistic views of themselves as readers; perceiving, for example, picture book reading to be a legitimate form of reading. Some considered reading ability to be associated with age, i.e. one would be able to read when one was 'big'. Some nursery children and the reception class children expressed narrower constructions, viewing reading as a process of decoding print, with some reporting that using pictures was not a legitimate reading technique. Furthermore, the study demonstrated how the reading scheme used in the reception class shaped children's perceptions of themselves as readers, as children evaluated their reading ability based on their grade within the scheme. Levy (2011) concluded that; "research has indicated that many young children appear to be developing negative perceptions of themselves as readers as a direct consequence of the schooling of reading" (p.137).

Research examining identity and literacy with very young children is limited, and although the papers reviewed above have taken distinct perspectives and approaches, the body of research collectively elucidates the sociocultural assertion that identities are fluid and co-constructed in dynamic relationships between child and environment.

As noted previously, this thesis builds upon sociocultural literacy research and takes as given the notion of literacy and identity as culturally shaped and socially co-constructed, but as Moje and Luke (2009) assert:

"..it is simply not enough to say that identities are produced in social interaction, that they are multiple and shifting. It is not enough to say that identity and self are isomorphic, that identities are positions, that identities are the product of a developing mind. The key to rigorous literacy-and-identity studies seems to lie in the recognition of what particular theories can do for our understanding of how literacy and identity work to develop one another" (p.432).

Accordingly, I turn to a detailed theorisation of identity in the concept of 'funds of identity' (Esteban-Guitart and Moll, 2014a; 2014b). Building on the notion of 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al., 1992; Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti, 2005), Esteban-Guitart and Moll, (2014a) draw on Vygotsky's concept of 'perezhivanie' (of which a detailed discussion is presented in chapter 3) to address the challenges of understanding identity simultaneously as a social and cultural construct, and as an individual and intrapersonal formation. When applied to education, the concept of 'funds of knowledge' is founded in the premise that, through their experiences in their various communities, children accumulate bodies of knowledge and skills, which are forms of capital that can be utilised by teachers as powerful educational resources. Through employing a Vygotskian perspective, Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014a; 2014b) propose 'funds

of identity' is an analytical concept to examine how children use their funds of knowledge to construct, develop and express their identities.

Like Rowsell and Pahl (2007), Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014b) suggest that 'funds of identity' are 'inscribed into artefacts', not only texts, but also language and ideologies, for example. Children's funds of knowledge (including their skills, practices, relationships, and cultural artefacts) are socially, culturally and historically acquired resources, creating funds of identity, or a metaphorical 'toolbox' to draw upon for; "self-definition, self-expression, and self-understanding" (Esteban-Guitart and Moll, 2014b, p.31), and through which, one subjectively experiences being oneself.

Thus, Esteban-Guitart and Moll's, (2014a) concept directs us to consider not what identities are per se, arguing that; "identity is not a 'thing' but a social construct vaguely referring to a vastly complex set of phenomena" (p.32), but rather, 'funds of identity' provides a conceptual tool to theorise and research how identities are constructed and experienced at a given moment.

In summary, viewed from sociocultural perspectives both literacy and identity can be thought of as co-constructions. In this thesis, I accept the notion of social co-construction as 'given', as a starting point to explore what this means for the personal and unique experience of the individual child, through applying and extending the Vygotskian concepts employed by Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014a; 2014b). These theoretical concepts are detailed in the following chapter, but firstly I will discuss how sociocultural perspectives, in conjunction with evolving technologies for literacy have opened-up more expansive understandings of literacy and literacy learning.

CHANGING, MULTIMODAL AND EMERGING VIEWS OF LITERACIES

Language changes over time and between contexts of use, however, Burnett and Merchant (2018a) suggest that; "as a more codified form of language" (p.17) literacy has traditionally been more stable than verbal language. New technologies, however, have added new dimensions to understandings of young children's literacy learning (Wolfe and Flewitt, 2010). Burnett and Merchant (2018a) discuss how 21st century technologies have led to a rapid expansion of new literacy practices, but stress that new media does not replace old. Print and digital literacies 'happily coexist' (p.18).

Young children's engagement with literacy through 'digital texts' is now an expansive area of study. Research highlights the sophistication and complexity of young children's digital

practices, where for example, young children physically manipulate the media by 'swiping' whilst simultaneously engaging in social and textual interaction (Knobel, 2006; Kucirkova et al., 2013). In a study of children's use of iPads in the home environment, the affordance for independent exploration was found to motivate digital literacy learning and that conventional literacy learning developed in unison (Wong, 2015). A review of literature of children's digital literacy practices (Kumpulainen and Gillen, 2017) proposes that, contrary to popular belief, children's engagement with digital technology is often active and agentive; and children's play and learning has been found to move seamlessly between online / offline spaces (Marsh, 2010; 2014; Burnett et al., 2014). Therefore, it is arguably, unhelpful to take a binary view of digital and conventional literacy practices, but rather to conceptualise children's contemporary literacy practices as involving multiple media.

The multimodality of literacy

Different media afford children access to the content of a text through different modes. Digital media allows for the combination of sound, colour, moving and still images, symbols and print to combine in the texts that young children produce and consume (Flewitt, 2013). However, while multimodality, in literacy studies, is often associated with new digital technologies, the simultaneous use of multiple semiotic systems in the representation or communication of meaning is a longstanding human practice (Flewitt, 2013). Multimodal perspectives challenge the idea that language, written or oral, is the dominant mediator in a communication, asserting that meaning is constructed through the integration of multiple different modes (Norris, 2004). In speech, non-linguistic modes, such as intonation, volume and pace of speech, alongside facial expression, gesture, gaze, and body language all contribute meaning. In texts such as picture storybooks, combinations of illustration, shading and light, colour, and the size, shape and position of the print all create and enhance, not simply replicate, the meaning conveyed by written language (Flewitt, 2013; 2017). Different modes take a greater or lesser role at any moment (Norris, 2004). In an ethnographic study of inclusive practice in early childhood education, Flewitt, Nind and Payler (2009) highlight how one teacher used multiple, integrated modes of communication, which made a group story session more accessible to one particular child with learning difficulties. Cremin et al. (2018), in a study of 3-5-year-olds storytelling and story acting revealed how children's storytelling involved complex multimodal ensembles of speech, gaze and posture. Different modes have different affordances and possibilities for making meaning, which may differ between contexts, but the affordance of any mode is dependent on the knowledge and skill of the person using and interpreting it (Kress, 2010). In a study of children's use of digital books, Pearman (2008) claims that sound effects improved 6 and 7-year-olds prediction and comprehension of characters' emotions. However, where additional features were added to digital books randomly, without

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careful consideration for the overriding meaning conveyed in the narrative, Hoffman and Paciga (2014) argue that these features distract from the storyline.

Young children's literacy practices, therefore, involve multiple text types, using multiple semiotic combinations, accessed through multiple distinct media (Burnett and Merchant, 2018a); these changing and emerging literacy practices have led literacy scholars to turn attention to the materiality of literacy, drawing on theoretical perspectives broadly known as 'posthumanist' and 'new materialist'.

The material 'turn' in literacy research

"Literacy practices unfold in material settings" (Pahl and Rowsell, 2013, p.266), and an author's material choices are a significant element of their meaning making ensemble. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the semiotic work done by the materials involved in literacy and to investigate the assemblages, or congregational agents involved in children's literacy practices (Wohlwend, 2008).

Sociocultural perspectives suggest that humans exert agency, and collectively construct the worlds they inhabit, creating artefacts and attaching meaning to 'things'. This anthropocentric view positions the human subject as active and agentive, and the non-human object as passive (Rautio, 2013). The tightly connected perspectives of new materialism (e.g. Barad, 2008; Bennett, 2010; Latour, 2005; Rautio, 2013), and posthumanism (Taylor and Hughes, 2016) facilitate a conceptual 'dismantling' of the subject / object hierarchy to view literacy materials and literacy users equally as 'agents' (Barad, 2008) or 'actants' (Latour, 2005) in literacy events.

These theoretical perspectives are not straight forward, as Taylor (2016) states;

'Posthumanism is a mobile term and the field of posthumanist thought in education is characterized by heterogeneity, multiplicity, and profusion. Posthumanism is perhaps best considered as a constellation of different theories, approaches, concepts and practices' (p.6).

In simple terms, researching children's literacy events from a posthumanist perspective would encourage observation of what the pens, paper, book, iPad, touch-screen or keyboard, 'do' with the child, rather than what the child does with the media; exploring how objects configure a situation (Roehl, 2012). Although, as Barad (2008) argues, it is not the agency of each component that is important, but the 'intra-action' between all human and non-human actants that should be the focus; this is where learning, development or evolution takes place, both for the human and non-human.

Intra-action, or relations between the object and subject become blended and difficult to discern, as abstract ideas, thoughts, feelings and information are represented or communicated in a material form (Burnett et al., 2014). From this perspective, the different 'ways of doing' literacy, can be thought of as socially and culturally configured, but simultaneously, the materials involved in literacy also guide people to participate in certain ways (Budach, Kell and Patrick, 2015). This intra-action is evident in any text engagement, be the text a 'ticket', a picturebook or the multiple elements of a webpage or app. However, literacy research exploring such intra-action has tended to focus on digital technology. Touch screen phones and tablets, responsive to 'tap and swipe' make these devices user-friendly, enabling very young children to access multimodal digital literacy practices in ways unthought of a generation ago (Wohlwend and Buchholz, 2014). Yet, in sociocultural research, the screen and controls, so crucial for engagement, go almost unnoticed in human-centred research because the user's attention is drawn into the virtual space; the materiality of the device only becomes apparent when it fails to function as expected (Burnett et al., 2014). In contrast, Merchant (2017), in a study of children's use of iPads, analysed the ways in which children held the tablet and how its size and weight, alongside its functions, provoked certain kinds of responses and shaped children's meaning making.

Posthumanist theories do not replace, but rather complement sociocultural thinking in literacy research. The notion of 'artefactual literacies' (Pahl and Rowsell, 2013) combines understandings of texts as multimodal and material with sociocultural perspectives. The authors argue that people's identities, interests, concerns, and experiences are infused into the materiality of the multimodal texts they produce, and that artefacts hold particular value and meaning for people in particular contexts. Burnett and Merchant's (2018b) conceptual paper also assimilates sociocultural and posthumanist perspectives to expand the notion of the literacy event (Heath, 1982; Barton and Hamilton, 2000). Burnett and Merchant (2018b) discuss how the notion of event suggests a singular occurrence and propose a shift in thinking to account for the fluidity and relationality of what happens when people, places and things come together. The authors propose 'literacy-as-event' as a heuristic to think of the event as evolving moment to moment, but simultaneously involving multiple past events and with multiple potential future ones. Burnett and Merchant (2018b) argue that this lens might;

'help us better articulate and develop research methods that bring indeterminacy and affect into play, and that work with complexity rather than seeking to order it through linear accounts' (p.10).

The posthumanist view, and literature bridging social and material perspectives, illustrate the need to examine relations between child and the material environment to gain deeper insight into children's literacy practices, experiences and development.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Through a brief review of the history of scholarly thinking in the field of emergent and early childhood literacy, chapter 2 began by discussing the different ways in which literacy and literacy learning have been theoretically framed, and how these have evolved over time. Distinct theoretical perspectives influence how literacy is understood; different lenses produce different views. Hence, it is crucial to be clear and precise about the theoretical framework underpinning research.

This chapter's synthesis of socio-culturally framed literature of early literacy and the nexus of children's literacies and identities has demonstrated how literacy can be conceived of as social practices that are culturally shaped. Yet, the literature addressing the changing nature of literacies in the 21st century illustrate how expanding socio-cultural views and embracing theoretical pluralism can lead to more nuanced and textured understandings of children's engagement with literacy. The research reviewed demonstrates how different social and cultural contexts, different media, technologies and modalities of 21st century literacies enable or constrain different kinds of activities and interactions; as Kervin (2019) proposed, it is these interactions and activities that require further investigation.

The literature reviewed here has positioned early childhood literacy as a phenomena that happens in social contexts, between people and materials. The gaps in the literature relate to how everyday social literacy practices are also unique and personal experiences for the individual children involved in them. Chapter 3 turns to cultural-historical approaches to studying children, reviewing and evaluating literature rooted in neo-Vygotskian theories, to consider and explicate the conceptual lenses through which this study explored children's unique experiences of literacy.

CHAPTER 3: CULTURAL-HISTORICAL APPROACHES TO STUDYING CHILDREN

This chapter begins with a detailed exploration of cultural-historical approaches to studying young children, exploring multiple ‘neo-Vygotskian’ concepts to propose a conceptual and analytic framework for this research of children’s literacy experiences. This leads into debate of the equivalence or nexus of emotional and intellectual processes and how conceptualisations of ‘affect’ potentially offers a unified view. Finally, the chapter reviews research and conceptual literature on the issue of children’s ‘interest’ and ‘interests’ in literacy.

CULTURAL-HISTORICAL APPROACHES TO STUDYING CHILDREN

Sociocultural perspectives of literacy therefore, view children’s literacy development as occurring both during, and because of their participation in the practices of their social communities. Cultural-historical theories encompass a system of interrelated concepts and methods for the detailed study of children’s development from individual to societal level (Schousboe and Winther – Lindquist, 2013). To study something from a historical perspective involves understanding that the subjects or phenomena under investigation are in a constant process of change (Schousboe, 2013). Human development, alongside societies and culture, and their practices are permanently in a transient state, there is no end point, or ‘result’; research data capture the moment in which we ‘pressed pause’ in the developmental process (Veresov, 2016). Culture, from this theoretical perspective, does not refer to static features of ethnicity or nationality, but rather refers to peoples’ and societies’ “ways of life” (Rogoff, 2016, p.183) or; “all the nonbiological dimensions that shape children’s development, such as the values, practices and affordances within a family, community or society” (Fleer, 2015, P.21). The origins of cultural-historical theories are widely attributed to the body of work produced by Lev Vygotsky between 1924 and 1934 before his untimely death, which theorised the inseparable nexus of human development and culture (Bozhovich, 2009; Hedegaard, Edwards, and Fleer, 2012). It is not the intention, nor within the scope of this thesis to offer a comprehensive review of Vygotsky’s work; the foci in this review are the works of contemporary scholars using cultural-historical concepts and, in doing so, further developing Vygotskian principles in the study of children and childhoods.

Cultural historical concepts offer a theoretically sound way to challenge 'universal' views of child development currently dominating educational policy in England and elsewhere (Fleer, 2015). As discussed previously, universal perspectives (such as the 'autonomous' view of literacy (Street, 1995)), tend to underpin empirical positivist research, and are characterised by developmental norms and age-related milestones specified in curriculum and other policy documents in England, for example, 'Early Years Outcomes' (DfE, 2013). Such views not only fail to account for cultural plurality and for the diversity of children's everyday lives, they do not adequately explain the developmental process (Bozhovich, 2009). Cultural-historical concepts elucidate more localised, nuanced views of development, enabling research to view the individual child in relation to the environment (Fleer, 2015; Quinones and Fleer, 2011).

Hedegaard's (2008a; 2009; 2012a; 2014; 2018) extensive cultural-historical work facilitates research of children and childhoods across multiple levels; societal level, institutional level, the level of 'activity' and individual level. Advancing Bronfenbrenner's (1977) seminal work on the 'ecological model of development', which defined distinct levels, Hedegaard's model offers a relational view, conceptualising both the interplay and 'unity' between levels (Hedegaard, 2012a; Hedegaard et al., 2012); "the aim is to define the area of study as a whole" (Hedegaard, 2012b, p.10). Echoing Barton and Hamilton (2000) in many respects, Hedegaard argues that societies are made up of multiple institutions (such as family homes, schools, early childhood settings, religious organisations, supermarkets, cinemas), each with unique sub-cultures and objectives, yet anchored in wider cultural traditions, legal and moral frameworks. Children move fluidly between multiple institutions all with distinct, yet interrelated literacy practices. It is in cultural institutions, Hedegaard (2012a) argues, that the relations and unity of child and environment are most apparent, and where the conditions for development can be studied.

The notion of relations, or unity is an important concept because, as Dreier (1999) argues, while participation is shaped by cultural and social practices, it is non-uniform; individuals participate differently, taking up different roles and positions. Dreier argues that if social practices simply shaped human development; "society would be some sort of container that holds and influences all members in the same way, the relationship between individuals and social structure would be uniform, all members would be basically uniform individuals" (Dreier, 1999, p.7). Similarly, Leontiev (1978) rejected the notion that the environment's influence on an individual's development could be simply conceived as one of 'stimulus – response'; he stated; "no development directly comes from what comprises only the prerequisites necessary for it" (Leontiev, 1978, p.105). Cultural-historical approaches, therefore not only seek to overcome universal views of child development, but also seek to

overcome social determinism. Therefore, the unit of analysis in cultural-historical research needs to be more specific than 'practices' (Hedegaard, 2012a).

To capture the 'unity', a central tenet in cultural-historical theories is that the conditions for participation are created in 'dialectical' relations between child and environment. The term in its dictionary form usually refers to opposing entities or counterparts, however, in the cultural historical context, Quinones and Fleer (2011) define dialectic as; "when there is a dynamical relationship between the individual and the social environment consisting of social relationships and the surrounding place" (P.127). In these dialectical relations, something new evolves, which is indivisible into component parts; a 'gestalt', or 'aggregate', i.e. a whole that cannot be understood as the sum of its parts (Blunden, 2011; Roth and Jornet, 2016). The notion of dialectical relations or child-environment unity is key to understanding Vygotsky's notion of the 'social situation of development'.

SOCIAL SITUATION OF DEVELOPMENT

Developed later in Vygotsky's work, the social situation of development is, according to Veresov and Fleer (2016), the unique and dynamic unity of child and their environment which occurs through the child's active participation. Vygotsky maintained that the environment alone cannot be considered the social situation (González Rey, 2016); the child's agency is key. Bozhovich ²(2009) a student of Vygotsky's, explains that analysis of complex phenomena should be conducted; "in terms of 'units' that preserve in simplest form properties intrinsic to the whole" (p.66). Vygotsky, Bozhovich (2009) attests, perceived the units of analysis not to be social or material aspects of the environment, or the cognitive or corporeal actions of the individual, but proposes that the relationship is, in and of itself a unit.

While influenced by societal forces and conditions, the social situation of development is constructed in the moment through the child's awareness, or interpretation of how the social and material situation affects them (Veresov and Fleer, 2016). The concept explains how children experience the same situation differently, as Bozhovich (2009) states:

"Everyday observation and analysis of countless pedagogical phenomena attest to the fact that given the same understanding, children often have different attitudes toward one and the same reality, experience it differently, and react to it differently" (p.68).

² Lydia Bozhovich was a Soviet psychologist. This 2009 paper was first published in Russian as a chapter in Bozhovich's 1968 book, 'Personality and Its Formation in Childhood', translated by M. Sharpe.

Blunden (2011) likens the social situation of development to a 'predicament' from which the child emancipates themselves firstly through their awareness, or interpretation of the situation, and secondly by acting in it. Blunden's language choice is quite dramatic for children's everyday encounters, but the sentiment further highlights that it is the child's agency that is key; only through the child's awareness and activity, does the environment become the source of development. Hence, in one preschool setting, at one moment in time, there are as many social situations of development as there are children.

The concept of the social situation of development therefore offers an analytic tool to study the processes of development; the question is how to use it in research (Fleer, 2015). Leontiev (1978) posits that the environment's influence on a child's development or consciousness takes place during their cognitive and corporeal activity, which he describes as 'self-movement'. Leontiev (1978) states; "man's activity is the substance of his consciousness" (p.26). Built on Leontiev's work, is the concept of 'activity settings'.

ACTIVITY SETTINGS

Activity settings are recurrent concrete events within the everyday cultural practices, routines and traditions of societal institutions, such as family mealtimes or story times at nursery etc. (Bang, 2009; Hedegaard, 2012a). Bang (2009) explains that the activity setting, as a unit of analysis, encapsulates the 'immediately present', that which is explicitly observable by the researcher, and the 'absent present', that is, social and cultural forces, implicit, but to some degree, often discernible through ethnography. However, while conceptualised as a concrete event, the activity setting is not a pre-existing entity that the child enters, but rather is co-constructed by the shared activity of its participants, orientated by institutional practices and objectives and material affordance; the analytic lens must then capture multiple perspectives, including that of the focal child. Thus, the activity setting can be thought of as 'context' in the broadest sense.

Hedegaard (2012a; 2012b; 2014) discusses the significance of 'demands and motives' for analysing relations in the activity setting. Echoing Leontiev (1978), who stated; "The concept of activity is necessarily bound up with the concept of motive" (p.6), Hedegaard (2012b) elaborates suggesting that motives can be thought of as 'forces' both in the child and in the environment that, in unity, account for a child's activity. Hedegaard (2014) states; "the relation between a subject's motives as she engages in an activity and the demands and the objectives of the practice in which the activity is located is seen as a mediated relation." (p.189). Accordingly, Chaiklin (2014), warns to resist viewing motive as the possession of the individual,

as a one-way force that drives action, but rather as; “relationships that organise a person’s actions in the situation in which they are acting” (p.212). Motives can be thought of as the child’s intentions, desires or needs, which evolve in relation to the activity setting. Hedegaard (2014) argues for a focus on demands and motives in research, stating:

“Because it is in the activity setting within a practice that the relations between institutional objectives and the demands from institutional practice can be studied in relation to a person's motives and the demands in the setting that are placed on both other people and material conditions.” (Hedegaard, 2014, p.189).

In a study of young children’s digital play, Fler (2018) used Hedegaard’s (2014) model, revealing how new digital technologies place new demands on children, creating new conditions and possibilities for development. Exploring the play and pedagogic practices of culturally diverse expatriate families with children attending an international kindergarten in Malaysia, Adams and Fler (2016) show how examining demands and motives offered insight into how school practices changed family pedagogy. Furthermore, Munk (2018) found that the analytic lens of ‘activity settings’ enabled an understanding of teacher’s motivations, or the projects they pursued on a moment-by-moment basis in the classroom.

In seeking to elucidate the child’s perspective, Bang (2009) argues that the activity setting comprises three general aspects, ‘artefacts’, ‘social others’ and ‘self’, and that the relations between these aspects are shaped by societal norms; that is, the ‘absent present’ or ‘context’. Extending Gibson’s (1977) ‘affordance theory’, which primarily focused on reciprocity between person and properties of objects, Bang suggests that the affordance for action manifests in the relations between artefacts, social others and self. Waters (2017), also extended affordance theory in a study of children’s outdoor play, focusing on societal forces. She discusses the affordance, and constraints created by powerful social rules and behavioural norms governing the activity. Bang (2009) however, stresses the significance of the affordance generated by ‘self’ in the relations. As a conceptual framework, the ‘activity settings’ model offers a view of the ‘relational whole’ from societal to individual level. Capturing the child’s perspective, therefore is crucial, as Bozhovich (2009) states;

“From this it can be concluded that in order to understand exactly what effect the environment has on children, and, consequently, how it affects the course of their development, the nature of children’s experience must be understood, the nature of their affective relationship to the environment.” (p.66)

To understand the nature of the child’s experience, I now turn to the concept of *perezhivanie*.

PEREZHIVANIE

The term *perezhivanie* appears throughout Vygotsky's writing, but it was in his later work that he developed the concept, passing away before it was complete; the concept is said to be Vygotsky's 'unfinished work' (Chen, 2015; Mok, 2017). Consequently, it is the least well defined of Vygotsky's concepts; undertaking this review highlighted that the body of literature on *perezhivanie* comprises many more conceptual papers than research papers, highlighting that it is a difficult notion to grasp and an arduous one to operationalise in research (Michell, 2016). González Rey (2016), notes numerous contradictions in Vygotsky's work on *perezhivanie*; the concept remains contested by Vygotskian scholars, as do the relations between *perezhivanie* and the social situation of development (Fleer, Gonzales Rey and Veresov, 2017).

The general dictionary translation of *perezhivanie* into English is 'experience', and Mok (2017) noted in literature translations such as 'lived experience', 'emotional experience', 'affective experience' and 'inner experience'. However, as Blunden (2016) explains, these terms fail to fully capture the essence of the concept, hence the Russian term is increasingly being used in literature in English. Adding to the complexities of translation, Blunden (2016) points out that as the Russian language does not use articles, it is not clear to English speakers that 'a' *perezhivanie* is a singular unit or episode; the term is often mistakenly used as a mass noun. The distinction between the singular '*perezhivanie*' and the plural '*perezhivaniya*' is an important one as it defines the unit of analysis and frames the concept.

In literature and research, Vygotskian scholars have used *perezhivanie* to denote a theoretical concept, a phenomenon, a unit of analysis, a unit of consciousness, the unity of cognition and emotions, a unit integrating child - environment and, in relation to play and the arts, as a double subjectivity (Mok, 2017; Fleer, 2016; Veresov and Fleer, 2016). The latter reading has been used by Ferholt (2015) in researching 'playworlds', where children act out a role, pretending to be someone / something, while simultaneously experiencing the immediate environment in the first person. However, this reading of *perezhivanie* is not taken up in this study.

Referring to a definition of *Perezhivanie* by Varshava and Vygotsky in an untranslated 'psychological dictionary' in 1931, Veresov and Fleer (2016) discuss *perezhivanie* as a phenomenon, explaining how the term encompasses both the 'act' and the 'content' of a person's activity, meaning that *Perezhivanie* is both what is being experienced (i.e.

environment) and how it is being experienced (i.e. child), as an unified whole. In other words, perezhivanie, in this reading, foregrounds not what has happened from an objective stance, but how it has been subjectively perceived by the individual and the meaning they attach to it. This reading of perezhivanie again explicates why multiple participants present within an activity setting will experience it differently, as Fler (2016) states, “the same social and material environment will elicit different perezhivanie by the children” (p.43).

Conceptualising perezhivanie as a unit of consciousness, Blunden (2016) suggests that, as cells are the units that make up a person on a biological level, perezhivaniya are the units that make up the person on a psychological level and can therefore be thought of as “the units of our autobiography” (p.282).

To conceptualise child / environment unity as a unit of analysis, as is adopted in this study, Vygotsky (1994) used the metaphor of perezhivanie as a unique refracting prism. He states;

“it is not any of the factors in themselves (if taken without reference to the child) which determines how they will influence the future course of his development, but the same factors refracted through the prism of the child’s emotional experience (perezhivanie)” (p.340).

This metaphor, further developed in literature (Mok, 2017; Veresov and Fler, 2016; Fler, 2016) depicts the child’s perezhivanie as a personal and unique prism through which the activity setting is refracted, determining their interpretation of the situation, and contributing to the sculpting of the prism (the child’s consciousness), through which subsequent activity settings are experienced. The prism though, cannot be thought of as simply a cumulation of one’s perezhivaniya, but rather, that in each perezhivanie, a qualitative change occurs in both the child and environment, which, for the child leads to a ‘self-movement’, that is, an altered disposition (Roth and Jornet, 2016). Each new perezhivanie not only adds to, it reshapes the existing prism. Veresov and Fler (2016) stress that while the prism tends to be the focus of the metaphor, attention in research should be directed to the process of refraction, this is where child – environment dialectical relations are foregrounded (Veresov, 2017). The child’s activity in the literacy event therefore is determined by their unique prism, through which s/he interprets and affectively relates to the activity setting. Hence, as Gonzales Rey (2017) states; “Experiences are subjective productions rather than a reflection or assimilation of external facts, influences or objects” (p.182).

Using perezhivanie to study young children’s interactions with iPads in an early childhood setting in Saudi Arabia, Sulaymani and Fler (2017) were able to study the ‘essence’ of the experience, rather than the content of the activity, revealing how iPads mediated children’s self-regulation. Chen (2015), exploring the development of children’s emotional regulation,

showed how parents' perezhivanie creates conditions for children's emotional development. In a study of science learning, Fler (2013) found that the lens of perezhivanie moved analysis toward children's 'affective imagination', demonstrating how their teacher encouraged 'scientific noticing' through which; "children developed a sense of acting, feeling and thinking scientifically" (p.2104).

Using the lens of perezhivanie, Hammer (2017) describes a case-study of a 4-year-old boy living in foster care, who insisted on taking items, such as pieces of cutlery from his foster home to his preschool setting, keeping the item in his hand at all times, which impeded his play. Whilst one worker had expressed concerns that the boy was 'stealing', observational data revealed that the child, during his play, explained that he held the object to ensure it was returned to his foster home. The analytic lens of perezhivanie highlighted the importance of the item as a tangible link between his foster home and preschool, and how it acted as security, a reassurance that he would return home.

These studies elucidate how perezhivanie as an analytic lens captures the child's personal experience. Demonstrating how the findings of research are significantly influenced by the analytic lens, Adams and March (2015) reanalysed data to which conversation analysis (CA) had previously been applied. They note that the CA focused predominantly on the verbal contributions of the teacher and one dominant student. In contrast, through using perezhivanie as a unit of analysis, the authors reanalysis drew attention to the salience of one brief contribution made by another student, Steve, who seemed reluctant to position himself at the centre of the conversation. Steve's incorrect work became the mediator for the conversation, yet as he contributed no further, the CA failed to capture his perspective or contribution. The authors discuss;

"We believe that using perezhivanie as the unit of analysis enables a deep theoretical exposition of this "moment", "common goal" and "flow of activity" by showing the unity of social, material and personal characteristics entwined with the emotional tensions and intensity in the classroom experience." (Adams and March, 2015, P.325)

In Vygotsky's original work, the relationship between perezhivanie and the social situation of development was only implicitly made. Roth and Jornet (2016) argue that; "to think of perezhivanie as independent from its social situation is non-sense" (p.354). This is echoed by Veresov and Fler (2016) who state; "Without the concept of perezhivanie and the principle of refraction, the concept of the social situation of development remains incomplete" (p.329). Bozhovich (2009), however suggests that analysis of the perezhivanie is the first step in understanding the environment's influence on the individual, as it is where internal and

external factors come together, she stresses that analysis must also examine and account for underlying internal and external forces. In a similar vein, Mok (2017) suggests that whilst both concepts capture a dynamic relationship; “they serve distinct analytic purposes” (p.31). Hence, while clarity is elusive, Mok (2017) seems to suggest that the social situation of development unifies internal and external positions, while *perezhivanie* refers to one’s internal position, in relation to the external situation.

The concept of *perezhivanie* therefore offers great potential as an analytic tool to explore young children’s experiences of written text; the challenge is to identify the unique prism through which the child’s activity setting is refracted and interpret the process of refraction. Veresov (2015) suggest that the researcher must then understand *perezhivanie* as a phenomenon, i.e. ‘what’ is being experienced (content) but more importantly, ‘how’ it is being experienced (process). Veresov (2015) advises that through directing analysis to the process, that the prism and its refraction are discernible in research.

Thus, seeking to analyse a child’s *perezhivanie* as a process, elucidates the child’s transient internal states evolving in dynamic relations with the environment. Referring to their concept of ‘funds of identity’, Esteban Guitart and Moll (2014a) propose; “From our point of view, lived experience is a pathway to subjectivity that can help to integrate identity phenomena in social, historical, and cultural activities” (p.34). If *perezhivanie* then is a process or pathway it may debatably, lead to a qualitative change, or development in the individual’s understandings. This may be further illuminated in Gonzales Rey’s (2008; 2012; 2013; 2017) theorisations of subjectivity.

SUBJECTIVITY

Advancing cultural-historical theories, Gonzales Rey (2008; 2012; 2013; 2017) developed a new strand of cultural historical concepts in his work on subjectivity. Recognising alternative models of subjectivity in other fields, Gonzales Rey (2017) stresses that his work must be understood within the cultural-historical paradigm. This reading of subjectivity;

“seeks to understand human reality, not in an object-oriented way, but as a living network of facts, relationships and effects that only become meaningful to people when these are related to their subjective productions” (original González Rey, 2013, p.123; translation, Madeira Coelho, 2014, p.225).

Like *perezhivanie*, subjectivity offers a tool to view child-environment unity; it addresses the ways in which an individual’s innumerable encounters, historical and current, sustained or fleeting, that make up the eb-and-flow of everyday life become emotional and intellectual processes and understandings. The concept is; “centred on the symbolic-emotional units,

processes and configurations that characterise human experience” (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez, 2017, P.200).

Gonzales Rey (2012; 2017) elaborates upon this with the notions of ‘subjective senses’ and ‘subjective configurations’. Subjective senses, he suggests are ‘emotional-symbolic units’, that is, units of awareness or consciousness, known and /or felt about a situation, issue or phenomena, and awareness about oneself in relation; A ‘subjective sense’ therefore, is a cognitive-affective unit, where; “one of these processes evokes the other without becoming its cause” (González Rey & Mitjáns Martínez, 2017, p.200). Subjective senses are fluid and instantaneous and define one’s experiences as they are subjectively lived; they have a particular history, they originated at some point in a lived experience, yet shift and evolve in essence and nature. Subjective senses form dynamic networks that Gonzales Rey (ibid) refers to as ‘subjective configurations’.

These, Gonzales Rey (2012) explains, are systems, or structures of subjective senses that organise and form one’s understanding and feeling of a situation or phenomenon. While more stable than senses, subjective configurations are also malleable, continually reforming as new subjective senses come to the fore as the *perezhivanie* unfolds. For the individual in the moment, the subjective configuration can give the illusion of an objective reality, yet the concept of subjectivity, like *perezhivanie*, explicates how the same situation, phenomenon or type of activity is configured differently by each individual. Subjective configurations are therefore always singular, or personal; however, as Gonzales Rey stresses this does not reduce the concept to an individualist view of human experience. Subjective configurations form simultaneously on social and personal levels, a process through which the social becomes the individual. Subjectivity represents human experience in networks of social and cultural contexts. As Gonzales Rey (2008) states;

“subjectivity is not just an individual phenomenon, because social spaces and institutions also have a subjective character, taking part in a complex system of social subjectivity” (p.150).

This reading of subjectivity was used by Madeira Coelho (2016) as an analytic tool to explore the subjective dynamics of early childhood educator’s professional lives, illuminating how they expressed ‘being’ and ‘feeling as’ teachers. Gonzales Rey and Mitjans Martínez (2017) refer to the untranslated studies of Mitjans Martínez which adopt the concept of subjectivity. The first explored how children’s creative writing become subjective configurations, which then influenced other aspects of their lives (Muniz and Mitjans Martínez, 2015). The second study found that when teachers’ subjective configurations of children with disabilities changed, it led

to changes in children's own subjective configurations which enabled them to overcome some difficulties.

The developmental outcome of interaction between child and environment, therefore, depends on their personal subjective senses and configurations evolving in situ. Hedegaard (2012) reinforces this notion in stating; "A child's experiences depend on how the child understands the circumstances affecting him or her and the child's ability to reflect and generalise these circumstances" (p.133).

As discussed in chapter 1, this thesis is primarily concerned with children's experiences of literacy rather than with the resultant learning or attainment. Yet, acknowledging that these two aspects are intertwined, the notion of subjective senses and subjective configurations potentially complement the concept of *perezhivanie*. It offers an analytic lens to frame the qualitative changes or movements (including unfolding understandings of any given situation, small shifts in more generalised understandings and momentous 'eureka' moments) that occur for the individual as a situation is lived through as refracted through their personal prism of *perezhivanie*. Hence, the concepts offer an expansive, unconstrained view of 'learning' or 'development', which sit in stark contrast to the narrow literacy attainment criteria stipulated in the current Early Learning Goals (DfE, 2017).

CONSTRUCTING A CULTURAL-HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

This review provides a strong rationale for using cultural historical concepts in the study of young children's literacy experiences. The concept of 'activity settings', and analysis of the interplay of demands and motives, potentially enables a fuller understanding of a 'literacy event', elucidating the situation at individual, institutional and societal levels, and bringing to the fore, the dynamic and relational activity of child, social others, text/materials and context. *Perezhivanie*, conceptualised as a process of 'refraction' offers the possibility of a deep understanding of children's in-the-moment experiences, while the notion of subjectivity, and subjective configurations potentially illuminate the child's developing understandings of a particular literacy event, of literacy in their everyday lives and of themselves as users of literacy.

In offering analytic tools to study development in child-environment relations, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity also explicate another of Vygotsky's key assertions, the unity of emotion and intellect. Gonzales Rey's (2009) description of subjective senses as 'cognitive-affective units' illustrates how feeling evokes thought while thought evokes feeling, not in a cause-effect

manner, but that subjective senses necessarily involve both. Bozhovich (2009) also stressed this indivisibility, asserting that the course of a child's 'mental' development must be understood through; "the nature of their affective relationship to the environment." (p.66).

The notion of 'affect', 'affective relations' and 'affective engagement' has recently drawn some attention in literacy research. In addition, it is highly relevant to this study's theoretical view of social literacy practices and events as subjectively experienced at both an affective and cognitive level. Thus, the following section synthesises literature theorising and employing the concept of affect.

AFFECTIVE RELATIONS WITH LITERACY

The literature reviewed above elucidates how the concept of *perezhivanie* rejects dichotomous views of intellect and affect, or cognition and emotion (Madeira Coelho, 2016; Fleer, 2016; Roth and Jornet, 2016). To expose the unity of these processes, *perezhivanie* has been referred to as a 'unit of consciousness' (Blunden, 2016; Fleer, 2016, Mok, 2017). Similarly, Veresov and Mok (2018) assert that *perezhivanie* is not simply emotional; "but a complex psychological phenomenon" (p.90). Likewise, as discussed, Gonzales Rey (2009) describes subjective senses as 'cognitive-affective units'.

However, like 'identity', 'affect', 'affective engagement' or 'affective relations' are uncertain terms and abstruse concepts. As an everyday verb, affect can be taken to mean the capacity to influence or to act upon something or someone. Yet, throughout the literature discussing *perezhivanie*, the terms 'affect' and 'emotion' are at times, used interchangeably and synonymously, suggesting that 'affect' is taken to mean a person's emotional response to a stimuli. However, Chen (2015) suggests the term 'affect' is used by Vygotskian scholars to signify a wider view of emotion, encompassing a broad spectrum of psychological phenomenon such as perception, attention, or interest, for example, whilst distinguishing these from more abstract, analytical / conceptual thinking. Bozhovich (2009) seems to distinguish between cognitive and emotional processes, in order to highlight their interdependence, although it must be acknowledged that her original writing served to challenge the universal and individualist views of development of the era, grounded in the then dominant field of psychology. Thus, through the cultural-historical lens, 'affective relations' can be taken to denote both the multi-directionality of affect (child and environment affect each other), and the intra-dependence of multiple psychological processes (thought affects emotion / emotion affects thought).

The notion of 'affect', 'affective relations' and 'affective engagement' is further conceptualised by scholars working from different theoretical perspectives. Taking a post humanist perspective, and viewing affectivity as a socio-material process, or 'intensity', Mulcahy (2012) argues that affect firstly registers in the body, before reaching consciousness, or as Ehret (2017) proposes, affect is firstly a "pre-personal intensity" (p.101). Likewise, Massumi (2015) a political theorist, conceptualises affect as bodily response to stimuli prior to cognitive registering or processing. Viewed through this lens, affect is an embodied sensation through which meaning may be given to a situation or event at an emotional / cognitive level. Affect therefore, is always experienced in both body and mind, meaning that, from this perspective, all human activity involves, at some level, being affectively engaged with the socio-material environment. Watkins (2006), also questions the parity of 'affect' and 'emotion' often taken for granted in social and cultural research, proposing that while affect and emotion are intertwined; "emotion is substantially a product of affect" (p.273).

Referring to research conducted through laboratory experiments, Massumi (2015) discusses the time lapse between an event and a person's cognitive registering of it, as 'a missing half second', in which previous experiences and understandings come together into new conscious formations. In this respect, Massumi's views correspond with the concept of *perezhivanie* and subjective senses. However, his key focus is on the time lapse, which he describes as a space filled with bodily sensation and content not yet assigned specific meaning, and hence, a space of potential. Writing from a political standpoint, he argues that language, particularly in the form of political slogans, has the potential to amplify or dampen affect. Here, as aside, I wonder whether this notion offers a lens through which to understand young children's engagement with the logographic print associated with popular culture, for example. Drawing on anecdotes from my own professional experience, two very similar toys can affect a child differently through the commercial branding. Thus, Massumi argues that affect is a pre-conscious intensity that is felt and sensed, but cannot be named; once identified, affect becomes conscious thought. One might argue then, that human states we name as intrigue, interest, attention, confusion, 'awkwardness' or panic, for example are manifestations of affect. However, while in lab-based studies, a researcher may be able to isolate single stimuli, and measure a person's response, the ebb and flow of a literacy event in a family home, a supermarket or classroom environment involve simultaneous intertwining of multiple stimuli. So, whilst Massumi's work is theoretically interesting, arguably, his theorisation of affect becomes difficult to apply in ethnographic research.

In discussing the notion of 'affective encounters' in literacy research, Burnett and Merchant (2018a) use the term affect to illustrate how happenings in the relations between people and materials, "interrupts a situation and by doing so, brings something new into play" (p.64). They

elaborate further proposing that; “the affective encounter is not planned, nor is it predictable, but it grows in the moment and allows something new to come to the fore” (p.65), hence, this reading of ‘affect’ accounts for the flow of human activity. Affect, therefore is theorised as the vehicle, through which stimuli in the socio-material-textual environment shape children’s unique assemblages of embodied and emotional / cognitive affective processes.

This deeper understanding of affect, in my view, enriches the concepts of *perezhivanie* and subjectivity, enabling the ‘process of refraction’ and the resultant ‘subjective senses’ to be thought of as both embodied and psychological, manifesting in the flow of affective relations between child, social others, text/materials in a literacy event.

However, while manifesting in the moment, sediment of affect remains in one’s lived experience, as conceived of in theorising *perezhivanie* as a refracting prism. Memories, or lived experience of place, events and people conjure feelings that shape how the present is affectively experienced, giving sensation and meaning to the present moment, so that one’s affective response to stimulus is multi-layered, as we anticipate possibilities for the immediate future (Ehret, 2017). And returning again to Bozhovich’s (2009) work, prompts further intrigue about the longer-term effects of affect. Bozhovich states:

“It must be borne in mind that experiences, once they have taken place and formed a complex system of feelings, affects, and moods, begin to take on significance for people in and of themselves. Children may therefore strive to once again relive something they experienced previously that became appealing to them. In this case, experience is transformed from being a means of orientation into a goal in and of itself and leads to the emergence of new needs—needs for experiences themselves” (Bozhovich, 2009, p.74-75).

This suggests that children’s ‘interest’ in text, or the desire to engage and re-engage in literacy events can be considered through understanding the affective relations in the activity setting of literacy events, through the conceptual lenses of *perezhivanie* and subjective configurations. ‘Interest’, however is another widely used, but poorly defined term in early childhood research, policy, curriculum and practice guidance. Children’s ‘interest in text’ is one of four themes generated through this study’s analysis, and therefore, this chapter now turns to a review of scholarly thinking and research addressing the concept of young children’s ‘interest’.

THE INTEREST AND LITERACY NEXUS

In research, correlations have been made between young children's literacy interest (that is, the degree to which children choose to give attention to, and engage with literacy related activity (Hume, Lonigan and McQueen, 2015)) and their early literacy attainment in school (e.g. Hume, Allan and Lonigan, 2016). For example, a quantitative study (Carroll, Holliman, Weir and Baroody, 2019) claims that children's 'literacy interest' explained a significant variance in tests of children's letter knowledge, phoneme isolation and rhyme awareness, after controlling for the 'home literacy environment' and 'socioeconomic status'. In addition, and of greater significance to this thesis, is that the extensive work of Dyson (ibid), reviewed in the previous chapter and that of Rowsell and Pahl (2007) for example, who discuss how children's interest (internal) and interests (external foci of attention) influences the nature of their participation in literacy practices both in and out of the classroom.

'Interest' in early childhood policy and curricula in England

In England documentation relating to the EYFS curriculum (Early Education, 2012; DfE, 2013; DfE, 2017), makes abundant reference to 'interest[s]'. For example, it is used to describe behaviours considered typical for age, 'shows interest in play with sounds' (DfE, 2013, p.5), and it guides practice suggesting practitioners should; 'make sure resources are relevant to children's interests' (Early Education, 2012, p.6). However, the notion that a play based EYFS curriculum accommodates children's interests has been challenged. Firstly, the activities and materials available to children in early childhood educational environments are often determined and based on practitioners' values, and the extent to which a setting's environment and curriculum truly reflects children's interests is contested (Wood, 2014). Secondly, curriculum documentation offers little discussion of what constitutes interest[s], how it evolves or is made manifest (Chesworth, 2016). It has been argued that;

'following children's interests' has become a catch-phrase in early years practice, used as a justification for a particular approach or specific activities, 'even when children had nothing to do with them' (Birbili and Tsitouridou, 2008, p.143).

While on the one hand, it seems common sense that classroom activity will be more relevant and meaningful when it capitalises on children's interest[s], set against the backdrop of an attainment-driven educational system, the emphasis on children's interests could be construed as a vehicle through which to move children toward achieving predetermined goals (Chesworth, 2016; Wood; 2014); arguably, shallow mention of 'children's own interests' makes

a prescriptive curriculum appear child centred. Surface level readings of interests in curricula which focus on the content (i.e. trains, Disney Princesses, dinosaurs), fail to grasp the complexities, and as Birbili and Tsitouridou (2008) observe, policy and curriculum fail to acknowledge the extensive academic theorisation and research in the field of interest[s].

Theorisations of interest[s]

From a psychological perspective, the development of interest has been theorised in a four-phase model in the seminal work of Hidi and Renninger (2006), in which each phase is considered sequential and discrete. From this perspective interest refers firstly to a person's psychological state whilst engaged with an object, event or idea (content or focus), and, secondly their motivation for ongoing engagement with particular content (Renninger and Hidi, 2011). In later work, however, Renninger and Hidi (2016) also note that interest develops through social interaction and relations with the environment. Renninger and Hidi (2011) position interest as a precursor to learning, however, Schmid and Rotgans (2017) contest this assertion; drawing on data from three studies in classroom contexts, they propose two other possibilities. Firstly, the potential that knowledge acquisition develops interest, meaning that learning is a cause, not a consequence of interest. Secondly that knowledge and interest are reciprocally influencing.

Reporting a meta-analysis of 26 studies applying Hidi and Renninger's (2006) model to examine the relationship between young children's interest[s] and literacy outcomes, Dunst et al. (2011) concluded that children's interest contributed to literacy development. However, the authors acknowledged that it was not always clear what measurement of interest had been used in the studies reviewed. Similarly, Baroody and Diamond (2013) found that parent and teacher ratings of young children's interest in literacy did not correspond well with children's ratings of their own interest. These studies illuminate the difficulties of evaluating children's interest.

From an early childhood perspective, young children's 'schemas' offers another lens on interest[s] (Athey, 2007; Nutbrown, 2011). These repeated patterns of actions or behaviours are thought to be a means through which young children develop understandings of the affordances of the environment and of themselves; Athey (2007) proposed that through schematic behaviours, young children develop conceptual understandings. On a similar note, taking a social constructivist perspective, Neitzel, Alexander and Johnson (2008; 2016), explored children's early interest orientations. In their study of 109 children aged between 4:0 and 4:6 years at the outset of the study, Neitzel et al. (2008) employed a combination of laboratory tests, classroom observation and parent questionnaires. The authors identified four distinct patterns in children's activity, which reflected conceptual, social, procedural, or

creative interests. They argue that young children develop relatively enduring interest orientations which influence their choice of activity and shape how they participate in both formal and informal classroom activity. Their theorisation positions interest as children's preferred ways of engaging.

Using this model Rowe and Neitzel (2010), investigated the preferred types of writing activities of 11 children aged 2-3-years. They found that the personal interest orientations evident in children's broader play activities, were reflected in the ways in which they participated in emergent writing activities. Their study offers a lens through which to understand and further explore the variations and differences in young children's approached to writing, offering the potential to individualise emergent writing support and tailor the curriculum more effectively.

In later work, Neitzel, Alexander and Johnson (2017), further acknowledge the influence of the social environment in children's orientations, stressing that a new social setting, such as starting school;

“may trigger new interests or new social expectations may send messages that diminish the value of previous interests and children may adopt new standards and strategies of behaviour” (p. 391).

More recently social, cultural and historical perspectives of interest have emerged in scholarly work, grounded in qualitative and naturalistic research methodologies. The concept of 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al., 1992; González et al., 2005), (that is, culturally and intergenerationally developed bodies of knowledge people cumulate through experience and participation in homes and communities), has been found to be a useful analytic lens to research children's interest[s] (Hedges, Cullen, and Jordan, 2011; Hedges and Cooper, 2016; Chesworth, 2016). From this perspective, interest (s) is relational to cultural practices and Hedges et al. (2011) define children's interest as; “spontaneous, self-motivated play, discussions, inquiry, and/or investigations that derive from their social and cultural experiences” (p.187). The fore mentioned studies found that children's 'funds of knowledge' acted as 'stimuli' or 'mediators' of their interest and inquiry, suggesting children had a preference to engage with 'what they know'. Hedges and Cooper's (2016) study noted that infants as young as 6-months were keenly interested in observing and emulating the actions of adults and older siblings; the authors propose that children's interests are driven by an ultimate goal of developing positive identities as members of particular cultural communities. Recognising the collective and collaborative nature of children's participation in social practice, the authors claim that; “individual choice of activity is not a particularly valid indicator of genuine interest” (p. 316). From this perspective, Chesworth (2016) proposes that;

“children’s interests can be theorised as a desire to connect with and reconstruct meaning from the sociocultural activities, values and practices of the communities to which they belong.” (p. 295)

Similarly, Neitzel et al.’s (2019) ongoing theorisation of interest explored the ways in which family practices, and the values conveyed during parent / child interaction sculpt interest orientation. They conclude that multiple factors in the relations of child and environment influence the development of interest and suggest further research could illuminate the extent to which children’s interests are ‘artefacts’ of family culture. Likewise, Hedges (2018), reported research findings which adopted a narrative methodology, in which young people aged 18-25 described significant interests throughout their lives. Hedges points to how interest[s] are stimulated, encouraged and sustained through being embedded into family and cultural practices.

Socio-cultural theorisations of interest have been applied in early childhood literacy studies. Dyson’s (ibid) established body of work on young children’s writing has frequently made reference to children’s interest[s]. In her early work, Dyson (1984) noted that children displayed different orientations in their writing, influenced by social context. Some children seemed invested in developing the conventions of writing, while others paid attention to the linguistic messages comprising the content of their text. In later work, Dyson (2010; 2013) demonstrated how children’s interests in writing were collaboratively developed, and she discusses how personal and collegial interests become intertwined and become shared ‘cultural resources’; she proposes that interest in the activity of others is a great source of writing inspiration. Echoing Dyson’s work, Daniels’ (2016) ethnography in an early years classroom, found that although teachers’ pedagogical goals were embodied in the organisation and resources of the classroom, children were ‘skilled social actors’ who, in their play, interweaved their experiences, interests and meaning-making repertoires into those spaces, through a multitude of texts, and other artefacts.

The literature reviewed in this section demonstrates how different theorisations produce different views of ‘interest[s]’. This is demonstrated by Chesworth (2018), who through re-analysing one video-recorded episode of play, noted how children’s interest[s] are differently understood when viewed through different lenses. From an ‘instrumental policy perspective’ children’s interests were viewed as an instrument through which to achieve predetermined curriculum goals. When interest[s] were located in the peer culture of a classroom; “interests are recognised as distributed and mediated by participation in collective play activity” (Chesworth, 2018, p.5), and when

applying a 'new materialist' lens; "interests are created through children's intra-actions with the social, material and discursive elements of the worlds in which they live" (Chesworth, 2018, p.6).

The multiple definitions and theoretical models of interest is testimony to both the complexities and ambiguity of the concept. Although there is consensus that children's interest[s] are inextricably linked to literacy learning, understandings of how interest manifests are theoretically contested. As will be discussed in chapter 7, the theme of children's interest derived from this study's data, is grounded in the cultural historical framework, offering a novel and distinct view.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Through a detailed exploration of multiple concepts that comprise cultural-historical approaches to researching children, chapter 3 has served to explicate and justify the study's theoretical framework, or the system of concepts, or tools, to analyse data and view the phenomena of children's literacy experiences. In summary, the concept of 'activity settings' (Hedegaard, 2012a; 2014; Bang, 2009) is deployed in this study to conceptualise the literacy event as the culturally and institutionally shaped context in which dynamic relations between child, social others and text / materials evolve. *Perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994; Veresov and Fleer, 2016; Mok, 2017; Blunden, 2016) offers an analytic tool to conceptualise 'how' the focal children experienced an activity setting, as refracted through their unique and personal prism. Subjective senses and configurations (Gonzales Rey, 2008; 2009; 2012; 2017) contribute a lens to generate insights into how the child's 'perezhivanie' shapes their evolving thoughts, feelings and understandings of the circumstances affecting them. Across the cultural-historical literature reviewed was the proposition that to study a child's development, the researcher must seek to understand the dynamic and affective relations between child and environment. Through evaluating contemporary work from different theoretical positions, deeper and broader understandings of the concept of affect have been considered and have unsettled binary views of cognition and emotion. This review of the literature highlights that these continually developing conceptual frameworks, which comprise cultural historical approaches to studying children have not (to my knowledge) been previously applied to a broad study of young children's participation in literacy practices, and potentially offer some novel insights. Finally, literature in the field of 'interest' (as a key theme generated in this study), has been reviewed and synthesised,

illuminating the multiple theorisations of interest and positioning this thesis' understanding of interest within its cultural-historical theoretical framework.

Chapter 4 now turns to the study's methodology, to address how this theoretical framework was operationalised in the research, and to discuss the methods and procedures through which data were generated and analysed, and the measures taken to ensure the study was conducted ethically.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY PART 1 - CONDUCTING THE STUDY

This chapter sets out the framework through which children's literacy experiences were investigated. It details how my ontological and epistemological viewpoints, in combination with the theoretical framework, underpinned the study's methodology. This chapter aims to explain, justify and show congruencies between the methodology and the research aims, the approach taken, and the specific methods used to gather and analyse data. Sections herein are dedicated to issues of ethical research with young children and researcher subjectivity. The study's validity is defended throughout this chapter and is addressed in greater detail following the discussion of the analytic framework in chapter 5.

RESEARCH PARADIGM

"where two people have different ways of knowing, they will come to know different things, and acknowledging the knowers and knowns is central to a study of pedagogy" (Nind, et al. 2016, p.50-51).

Epistemic diversity in educational and social research means that there are multiple ways of researching the same phenomena (Frank, 2013). As Nind et al. (2016) encapsulate above, the researcher's beliefs about the phenomenon under study shapes how the research is conducted and how findings are derived from the data, and thus, must be made clear. This study's cultural-historical theoretical frameworks (chapter 3), were fundamental to my views regarding the relational nature of children's literacy experiences (ontology), the ways in which those can be understood (epistemology) and how they can be investigated in research (methodology), and thus, I situate this research firmly within an interpretivist, qualitative paradigm (Cohen et al., 2011). Put another way, I approached the study with a belief that children's experiences in a literacy event are relative to the socio-cultural-historical context and to the child's personal lived history and understandings, and thus are subjectively formed and reformed. There was no objective reality to be found in the data, but rather through systematically analysing and interpreting data, my aim was to construct credible understandings of children's literacy experiences.

From these philosophical assumptions, it is argued that both the researched and the researcher construct realities as they subjectively experience and interpret their social worlds in multiple interrelated, yet distinct contexts (Braun and Clark, 2013). The knowledge generated from qualitative research is therefore, always in flux and partial, a subjective representation of a reality at a moment in time (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Whilst acknowledging this as a criticism of qualitative research, I argue that the interpretive paradigm is appropriate for this study of children's literacy experiences; while actions during participation in literacy events could have been observed, documented, and potentially quantified, the study's more tacit aspects of experience, identities and affective states can only ever be subjectively known (Nind et al., 2016). This thesis offers detailed contextualised accounts of the nature and characteristics of children's literacy experiences, inter-subjectively co-constructed through drawing on the perspectives of multiple participants. The key to this project's validity³ (debated in chapter 5) therefore, lies firstly in the transparency of methods, processes, and researcher subjectivity and reflexivity (to which this chapter is dedicated), and secondly, in the evidencing and auditability of data upon which interpretations are made (chapter 6 and 7).

To construct meaningful understandings of children's literacy experiences, this study in many respects follows broadly qualitative traditions; data were collected in naturally occurring contexts, multiple data sources offered multiple perspectives and lenses, data analysis was approached largely inductively, and researcher subjectivity considered a valuable research tool (Cohen et al., 2011). However, the approach and methods used to gather data were bespoke, constructed to address the specific research aim and questions (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012), and are detailed throughout this chapter.

DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Whilst clearly defined research questions set the scope and parameters of a study (Punch, 2012), it is also important in qualitative inquiry that the research questions do not limit the study by framing it too tightly (Bryman, 2012). As Bhatti (2017) suggests, it is not unusual for naturalistic research to have open-ended questions or aims that evolve during the fieldwork

³ Validity is a contested term in qualitative research (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014) as traditionally it is concern with the accuracy of measurement and objective truths. In this study, validity is construed as trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) achieved through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (see chapter 5).

and throughout analysis of data. This potentially counters the dilemma of seeing only what is 'looked for' and allows other salient aspects to surface.

As discussed in the introduction chapter, at the outset of the study I was motivated to investigate young children's diverse ways of participating in literacy practices and events, in a way that was not centred around a predetermined view of literacy development or attainment. Thus, this study used an open-ended research aim to demarcate the study topic, and used more specific, although still open-ended research questions to steer the coding and analysis of data; these were shaped through the following process.

During the early stages of doctoral study, engagement with the academic literature indicated that exploring children's literate identities may offer a lens to understand the diverse and varying ways in which children participate in literacy, which informed the design and research questions for a pilot study, which will be outlined later in this chapter. Analysis of the pilot study data underscored the significance of children's 'intentions' in shaping their identities in a literacy event, which steered subsequent engagement with cultural-historical theory and research literature. As reviewed in chapter 3, this literature foregrounded the significance of 'motive orientation' (Hedegaard, 2014), 'experience' (conceptualised as *perezhivanie*) and the notion of 'affective relations' between child and environment in cultural activity. The review of literature revealed that this theoretical perspective was absent in research of early childhood literacy and could potentially advance previous socio-culturally framed research through a study of young children's personal experiences in literacy events. These theoretical lenses were further explored during early ethnographic fieldwork and engagement with data, leading to my view that juxtaposing the concepts of intentions, identities and affective relations could provide a framework through which to theoretically encapsulate and study children's literacy experiences. The process resulted in the following overarching research aim:

'To investigate young children's literacy experiences through juxtaposing their intentions, identities and affective relations in literacy events.'

This overarching aim was investigated through the three domains of inquiry; the aspects of 'intentions' 'identities' and 'affective relations' were structured through more specific research questions. Perceiving children's literacy experiences as emerging in the dynamic, or dialectical relations between child and environment, the research questions each involved two strands. These probed firstly the ways in which the child acted upon the relations, and secondly the ways in which those relations were shaped by aspects of the environment. The aim was to examine how each domain of the child's experience was shaped both through their own actions and agency and through the affordances of the environment.

- **Intentions**

- What are the child's motivations and intentions for participation?
- In what ways are expectations for participation explicitly or implicitly apparent in the activity setting?

- **Identities**

- What is the nature of the literate identities the child enacts?
- What is the nature of the social positions made available to the child?

- **Affective relations**

- What is the nature of the child's affective engagement in the activity setting?
- What aspects of the activity setting are affectively influencing the child?

RESEARCHER REFLEXIVITY

This chapter's opening section made explicit the ontology and epistemology underpinning the study's methodology. Interpretive research is, by nature subjective, and individuals can never be fully aware of their own subjectivities during participation in social activity, including research (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez, 2017). Nonetheless, this section confronts the effects of my own subjectivity throughout the research process, and the reflexivity through which it was addressed.

"Methods are unlikely to involve researching what is going on in pedagogical encounters without engaging with what could, or should be going on" (Nind et al., 2016, p.34).

My motivation to research early childhood literacy originates from, and is continually influenced by my own lived experiences, personal and professional, that have shaped my values and perspectives. On the one hand, I acknowledge that I hold strong beliefs and assumptions regarding what constitutes 'good quality' early years practice and parenting in relation to young children's literacy learning. However, this study evolved from the intrigue and curiosity provoked when those assumptions were challenged in practice and previous academic study; yet, my own subjectivity was clearly reflected in the research process and the interpretations generated. Therefore, I will briefly describe my background and position.

My personal journey to becoming literate was not a positive or easy one. I was in my mid-teens before I read a complete novel, silent reading time at school was spent daydreaming, and comics and magazines were of no interest to me. I didn't see the appeal of 'pen pals' and screen-based reading and writing were, at that time, a thing of the future. Whilst my personal

experience has undoubtedly shaped my views about early literacy education, my keen interest in the subject began when, in my role as early years practitioner, I was asked to co-ordinate the setting's literacy curriculum. It was through this work that I became acutely aware of the disconnect between policy / curriculum and what young children actually do with texts. Furthermore, my views on children's literacy learning align with my views of children, childhood and early education more broadly. Throughout sixteen years of practice, I increasingly grew to value children's individuality, voice and agency, leading to an approach to practice which, at times, colleagues considered overly liberal.

Hence, my own beliefs and values cannot be separated from the research study. As with all qualitative inquiry, researcher subjectivity was integral. As Braun and Clarke (2013) discuss, when used wisely, this can add depth to the study, although they stress the need for reflexivity. Researcher reflexivity is understood here as;

“the capacity of the researcher to acknowledge how their own experiences and contexts (which might be fluid and changing) inform the process and outcomes of inquiry” (Etherington, 2004, p.31-32).

Reflexivity was particularly significant in this research because I was a former member of staff at the nursery setting in which I gathered data. In many respects, this was highly beneficial; it abridged the process of establishing trusting relationships and facilitated access to the nursery. Furthermore, my cultural knowledge enabled me to act, dress, speak and function as a practitioner or 'insider', enabling the study's ethnographic methods and naturalistic approach, as detailed in the next sections; my presence did not seem out of place to children. However, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out the drawbacks of the insider role, proposing the need to be; “intellectually poised between familiarity and strangeness” (p.89). When researching in such a familiar context, there is a danger of failing to notice the 'taken for granted' aspect of that culture and; “becoming blinded by the overly familiar” (de Jong et al., 2013, p.169).

Thus, reflexivity was thought of as an 'attitude', or integral process, continually present throughout the project. Reflexivity was aided by disciplined use of my research journal, which made the reflexive process more systematic and transparent. This comprised reflective notes jotted down whilst in the field, or longer written reflections made retrospectively, documenting alternative possible views and contrasting thoughts and ideas. Multiple reviews of these notes firstly enabled conscious questioning of content and interpretations of data, identifying underlying assumptions and challenging subjective bias. Secondly, it enabled consideration of the ways in which the research methods and processes may have influenced action and interaction in the field. Reflexive phases were then incorporated into the analytic

framework, which provided structure for self-critique of the evidence for, and process through which findings and interpretations were constructed. Furthermore, keeping the research questions, and the theoretical lenses of perezhivanie, subjectivity and activity settings at the forefront of thinking during fieldwork, enabled, to some extent, a 'distancing', and provoked an 'urge to problematise everyday occurrences' (de Jong et al., 2013, p.171).

PILOT STUDY

A short pilot project took place 7 months prior to commencing the main study. Following a review of literature relating to the nexus of children's literacies and identities (as discussed in chapter 2) the pilot study, entitled '*Developing literate identities: The variation in young children's participation in cultural literacy practices*', took a two-case study approach. Data were gathered over two weeks through video recordings and field notes which documented the literacy-based activity of Bobby, aged 4:2 years and Amelia, aged 3:10 years (pseudonyms) in the nursery classroom and during two visits to each child's family home. Nind et al. (2016) stress the; "importance of fit across theoretical stance, pedagogical context and research approach" (p.3); the pilot project provided opportunity to trial and reflect upon both practical and conceptual elements of the study, and to explore how those elements created a cohesive research project. Hence, the entire research process was piloted, albeit on a small scale, through the stages of theorisation, planning, data gathering, data processing, analysis, interpreting and reporting (due to limitations of space, the pilot study findings are not reported here). The overall study design elicited 'close to the action' data of children's activity in various literacy events and thus was adopted in the main study with refinements. The pilot study was of great value, not least to trial and reflect upon the research approach and methods, but as mentioned earlier, thematic analysis of pilot study data surfaced children's 'intentions' as a key point of interest and steered the review of theory and research literature. Therefore, the pilot study guided the main study's conceptual framework, design, overarching aim and research questions.

The following section outlines the main study design, methods and timeframe, before each aspect is detailed in the remainder of this chapter.

MAIN STUDY OVERVIEW AND TIMEFRAME

Approach: the study took a longitudinal, multiple case study approach using ethnographic methods. Case studies were generated for five participant children aged 3-4-years-old.

Research sites: data were gathered in one nursery school classroom, family homes and in community venues. Data were gathered periodically over eight months.

Data gathering methods: observational data were gathered through video recordings and fieldnotes of children’s literacy activities in naturalistic settings. Supplementary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with parents and practitioners, fieldnotes, documental data and through activities to elicit children’s perspectives.

Analytic approach: a thematic analytic framework was constructed and applied.

Timeframe: Table 1 below shows the timeframe for the fieldwork phase of the study.

TABLE 1: TIMEFRAME OF THE STUDY'S FIELDWORK PHASE

Research Activity	July 2017	Sept 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	Jan 2018	Feb 2018	Mar 2018	April 2018	May / June 2018
Negotiating access										
Practitioner recruitment / consent										
Participant recruitment / consent										
Fieldwork – Nursery										
Fieldwork - Home visits										
Children’s interview activities										
Parent interviews										
Practitioner focus group										
Practitioner interviews										
Collating documental data										

LONGITUDINAL, MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES

To investigate children’s literacy experiences in a manner appropriate to the study’s philosophy, the approach needed to facilitate an in-depth insight into young children’s literacy-related activity during everyday events and routines. This thesis is concerned with children’s experiences in relation with the social - cultural - historical contexts in which those experiences are nested. An approach commonly associated with the study of human experience is phenomenology (Denscombe, 2014), and although there has been a move towards more hermeneutically informed approaches to phenomenology (Langdrige, 2008) the emphasis in phenomenology remains on describing experience from the first-person point of view. The

accounts presented in this thesis, while inter-subjectively developed, are ultimately my own, and therefore, I considered a phenomenological approach unsuitable.

Cultural practices tend to be studied through ethnographic methods, and while all ethnographic studies are unique, most share some common features pertinent to this study. Ethnographers tend to explore social phenomena in ways that cause minimal disruption to the research setting (Nind et al., 2016), and foreground the significance of context, both in the immediate research setting under observation, and wider contexts impacting upon it (Cohen et al., 2011). I sought insights that went beyond simple description of children's literacy activity and behaviours. Accordingly, data for this research were gathered through cultural immersion, and participant observation formed the basis of the data set; this was supported by substantial supplementary data through which the affordances and constraints of the context could be examined in detail.

Case studies allowed for the close, in-depth exploration of the literacy experiences of five children, in naturalistic settings, to capture the complexities and nuances of situations in which the phenomenon and context were often indivisible (Yin, 2009). The versatility of this approach enabled the integration of the multiple data sources necessary to create more holistic interpretive representations, firstly of each case, and subsequently of the phenomenon. Gathering data periodically over eight months enabled the case studies to develop and provided some insight into the trajectory of children's literacy activity and experiences, rendering visible how children's 'ways' of participating were both situated in, and evolved over time.

According to Thomas (2011), the 'type' of case study undertaken relates to the purpose it is to serve, thus case studies have been categorised as explanatory, exploratory, evaluative, intrinsic, or instrumental. Relevant to this study is Stake's (2005) distinction between the intrinsic case study, where the purpose is to discover something about a particular case, and the instrumental case study where the purpose is to learn about the phenomenon or social issue. This study leans toward the latter, seeking to gain a deeper, broader and alternative understanding of children's literacy experiences through investigation of multiple idiographic cases. Each case was investigated singularly and analysed to understand each child's literacy experiences at a point in time. However, interpretations of the phenomenon of young children's literacy experiences were drawn from the multiple cases.

Case study research, Stake (2005) asserts, is not a methodological decision, but a choice of what is to be studied. A case is considered a 'bounded system' (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009, Creswell, 2007), and this study's conceptualisation of literacy, as described in chapter 1, circumscribes the phenomena under study here, that is, children's experiences with written

and multimodal texts. However, it is acknowledged that children's experiences with texts are inseparable from the innumerable other semiotic modes humans utilise to make sense of and experience their worlds. The cases under investigation here, therefore, are not naturally occurring bounded systems. Rather, they are 'researcher created' to set parameters around the phenomena of study to respond specifically to the overarching research aims.

The criticisms of case study research tend to reflect those of qualitative research more generally, however, the inevitable lack of replicability in case studies should not be equated to lack of rigour (Yin, 2009). Rigour is pursued here through explicit justification of methodological choices, systematic analysis and elucidating how findings are empirically grounded. Another perceived shortcoming of case studies is the lack of generalisability of findings. However, the study's theoretical framing refutes the notion of a typical or generalised view of children's literacy experiences and, thus, the intention is to further develop theoretical understandings through interpretive accounts of a small number of idiographic cases.

STUDY CONTEXTS

Case studies were constructed over an eight-month timeframe, using data gathered in a nursery classroom, in family homes, and to a limited extent, in community spaces. Six children, their parents and nine nursery practitioners were recruited, however due to unforeseen circumstances, one child left the nursery mid-way through the study.

This section explicates the selection of research sites and recruitment of participants, followed by a discussion of the project's ethical considerations.

Research sites

The nursery was selected due to my established connections and its convenient location. As a former staff member, I had existing professional relationships with senior management and practitioners, and also with some families, whose older children had previously attended the nursery. As discussed earlier, this brought benefits and posed challenges, amplifying the need for reflexivity.

The nursery was 'state maintained', meaning that all places were offered free of charge. Most children attended daily and in accordance with the Childcare Bill (DfE, 2015), children could attend for 15 hours or 30 hours each week, depending on their parents' employment status. Thus, children attended either morning sessions (9am – 12 noon), afternoon sessions (12.30pm – 3.30pm) or full day sessions (9am – 3.30pm).

Whilst acknowledging that every early childhood setting has its own sub-culture, maintained nursery schools are a distinct type of provision in the early years sector in England. They are

concentrated in areas of higher levels of deprivation and are renowned for providing high quality early education and care for 2-4-year-olds and, in addition provide other services for families with children under the age of 5 (Early Education, 2015). In their report of early years provision, Ofsted (2014) stated that maintained nursery schools performed considerably better than other types of provision in their inspections. The report noted that this type of provision employs a high proportion of graduate level staff in comparison to most early childhood provision in England, which is offered by the private, voluntary and independent sector. This was reflected at the research site where the staff team comprised a headteacher, 3 teachers, 6 early years practitioners, 5 teaching assistants, 1 apprentice, 2 trainee teachers and 2 admin staff, meaning that staff held qualifications ranging from NVQ level 2 to graduate qualifications and qualified teacher status.

The nursery's location, based on the English Indices of Deprivation (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2015), is in one of the 20% most deprived wards in the UK; four of the five participant children lived within walking distance of the setting, one child's parents chose the setting as it was convenient for their childminder who collected him at the end of the session. At the time of the study there were 134 children on roll, aged between 2 and 4-years-old. Due to specialist staffing, the setting offered provision to a disproportionately high number of children with complex special educational needs, and 45% of children used English as an additional language.

The nursery followed the English EYFS statutory framework (DfE, 2017) and non-statutory practice guidance (DfE / Early Education, 2012), and over 16 years had been consistently judged as outstanding by OFSTED. The setting's curriculum took an integrated approach to provision and practice; approximately 70% of the daily session was dedicated to free-flow play, in which practitioners scaffolded children's play and learning. Approximately 30% of the session was allocated to a broad range of adult-led group activities, such as shared book reading, music, movement and singing sessions and maths games, for example. Each child was allocated a ⁴key person and key group, each with a designated base in the setting, in which children gathered at the beginning and end of each session and at a mid-way point for group activities. My established relationships facilitated the study's ethnographic methods, enabling me to take up an 'insider' position whilst conducting fieldwork at the nursery setting.

Gathering data in family homes was, in contrast, less naturalistic; as an 'outsider' and someone associated with the nursery, my visits interrupted children's everyday routines. Whilst I had

⁴ The Key person approach (Elfer et al. 2012) ensures that each child has a special relationship with at least one practitioner in the setting. The key person is responsible for meeting the child's needs, is the main point of contact for parents and documents the child's development.

established professional relationships with three of the families, with no pre-existing expectations of how interactions with a visiting researcher should be, diverse relationships evolved with each family over the duration of the study. Some home visits were with the participant child and their mother, others included siblings, both parents and, on one occasion, family friends. This offered rich, diverse data, but also dictated when video recording was appropriate, meaning that some home visits were only documented as field notes.

Keen to dismiss any notion of 'judgement', I stressed that the purpose of the visits was to play alongside, observe and gain a sense of what children liked to do at home. I endeavoured to position children and parents as holders of valuable knowledge. However, some parents initially seemed concerned about portraying a view of their family practices as educationally appropriate, other parents treated my visits as an opportunity for a discussion on their child's progress. Two younger mothers particularly appeared to perceive me as 'the expert', a position I seemed unable to shed. Nonetheless, whilst less naturalistic, the home visits generated insightful data, gathered as a participant observer in children's activities, or through video data capturing children's play whilst I chatted with parents.

Research participants

The sample size needed to be large enough to reveal the individuality and divergence of the ideographic accounts of children's literacy experiences, but not so large that depth and detail were lost (Cohen et al. 2011). Six case study children were initially recruited, one of whom left the nursery. Consequently, five cases are reported in this thesis. Selection of participants was not based on demographics such as social or economic status or ethnicity, however, there were some criteria for inclusion. Firstly, I was keen to recruit children and parents who would likely be comfortable with me observing, and confident to express their preferences regarding participation in research activity. Secondly to enable analysis of children's interactions in the verbal mode, children in the very early stages of learning English as an additional language were not considered, however, two participant children were bi-lingual.

The five case studies presented in this thesis are of Amir, Anya, Elijah, Ben, and Fynn (pseudonyms), some brief background information about each participant child is presented in table 2 below, and the children will be introduced in detail in the children's stories in chapter 6.

TABLE 2: PARTICIPANT CHILDREN

Child	Age when study commenced	Parental arrangements at home	Position in Family	Nursery attendance	Languages
Amir	3:7 years	Both parents	3/3	Morning sessions	Urdu / English
Elijah	3:0 years	Both parents	2/2	Full day sessions	English
Anya	4:0 years	Both parents	2/2	2 full days and 3 mornings	Polish / English
Fynn	3:6 years	Mother	1/3	Afternoon sessions, changed to mornings	English
Ben	3:9 years	Both parents	3/4, then 3/5	Afternoon sessions	English

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research with such young children raises ethical dilemmas. Ethical approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Open University prior to both the pilot and main studies (appendices A and B) and ethical considerations were informed by guidelines from the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011; 2018). This ensured that participant wellbeing, confidentiality and anonymity, and informed consent, were foregrounded from the outset. However, I also noted the importance of recognising the distinction between, “procedural ethics” and “ethics in practice” (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, p.265), and understood ethical research as an ethos, achieved through an ongoing commitment to conduct the study in a manner that is respectful to all participants and to the audience of the research (Alderson, 2014).

Access to the nursery was firstly negotiated with the head teacher and strategies were developed to appropriately provide information and seek the consent of all those who might potentially be involved in the project. It was necessary to recruit willing practitioners before identifying potential participant children, as the activity settings under observation at the nursery would frequently involve practitioners in their everyday roles; I did not underestimate how intimidating this could potentially be. Therefore, details of the study were presented at a staff meeting and information letters (appendix C) and consent forms (appendix D) made available for staff to ‘opt in’. Subsequently, all but one staff member returned consent forms.

The study’s design required not only parents’ co-operation, but also their participation as informants, and therefore parental consent was sought for both their own, and their child’s

involvement. Practitioner's knowledge was invaluable in identifying children and parents who would likely be comfortable with the research and happy for me to visit them at home. Some parents were initially approached by practitioners, others I approached myself, depending on whether there were existing relationships with families. In all cases, parents were firstly given verbal information about the study in informal discussion; those expressing interest were given written information (appendix E) and asked to contact me at the setting or by email for further information and consent forms (appendix F). It was stressed that participation was optional, nonetheless acknowledging issues of power relations, social context and norms of compliance (Gallagher, 2009), there was concern that some parents may find it difficult to decline. Therefore, no further follow up was made, meaning that after receiving the written information, parents needed to opt in. One mother contacted me to decline and one requested further details; in due course six parents agreed to their child's and their own participation.

Despite being the most important participants in the study, the six children were therefore the last from whom consent was sought. Alderson and Morrow (2011) define consent as; "the invisible activity of evaluating information and making a decision, and the visible act of signifying the decision" (p.101). Whilst, through inexperience, young children may lack the capacity to fully understand the nature of social research, they undoubtedly have the capacity to express their preferences and have a right to self-determination (Greig et al., 2007). Hence, at the outset of the fieldwork phase I firstly talked with each child, explaining that I would like to watch their play and sometimes film, showing children the small camera. I stressed that it was okay to say 'no', if they wished, and that I would leave. However, as Alderson and Morrow (2011) stress, 'not refusing' does not equal 'actively agreeing'; acknowledging that most participant children were new to the setting, and still discovering the routines and practice norms, I appreciated how difficult or confusing saying 'no' might be. Therefore, I undertook to monitor and respect children's ongoing assent, or willingness to participate through 'reading' subtle cues of body language and facial expression. During some early fieldwork, the ambiguity of assent became apparent. For example, on one occasion, Lara (who subsequently left the nursery) verbally agreed to my filming yet seemed a little uncomfortable and promptly left the activity. Therefore, drawing on examples from previous studies (Tatlow-Golden et al., 2013; Armistead, 2011) a pictorial information sheet was created for children (appendix G), to help them understand the research, differentiate between research activity and other activity in the setting and to reinforce the message that it was okay to say 'no'. This was introduced to all the children at the beginning of the second block of fieldwork in the nursery. Some of the children showed little interest in my booklet, however, Lara, began making her preferences known, communicating clear choices for or against filming.

To ensure identities were protected all data was securely stored, pseudonyms are used to anonymise participants and the setting is not named. However, it is acknowledged that due to my personal connection with the setting, some degree of anonymity is compromised (Pring, 2004).

When reporting findings from naturalistic research, 'video still' images from data can offer the reader depth of insight that cannot be achieved through narrative descriptions alone; however, such images clearly compromise anonymity. Once an image is in the public domain it becomes impossible for consent to be withdrawn, and researchers need to consider the ongoing ethical implications of publishing images. Thus, with parent and child consent, video still images were only included in paper copies of the thesis for examination purposes. These were converted into line drawings prior to the thesis being made available online. Some carefully selected images were used in small conference seminars (with consent), however, to prevent wider sharing, delegates were asked not to photograph slides.

Video recording in a large busy setting inevitably captured images of other, non-participant children. Therefore, before fieldwork began, all parents were made aware of the project during a 'welcome' meeting with the head teacher. The setting's own photo consent procedures were used to identify children whose parents did not agree to images being used for research and training purposes; any video footage containing images of these children was deleted. Although as Kustatscher (2014) points out, ethnographers can decide to exclude data from the study, but cannot prevent themselves being influenced by what is observed in the field, particularly when social interaction is a key interest; therefore, the notion of 'ethics in practice' and respectful research were adopted throughout.

As the study progressed, it became apparent that 'ethics in practice' is not always clear cut. For example, during home visits, one mother spoke to me at length about her own emotional difficulties and how, at times, she struggled with parenting. In discussion, she decided to self-refer to family services and subsequently began to access provision at the local children's centre. I also became aware that one focal child was regularly playing video games that were rated '18+'. Whilst this caused me some concern due to the potential to access content of a sexual and violent nature, their mother explained that the games were only played with supervision, and during my observation, the focus of the activity was 'virtual car racing'.

In summary, I approached the issue of ethical research as an 'ethos' of putting the well-being of participants at the forefront of the research. My aim was to learn about each child's capabilities and preferences for expressing their views, seeking advice from parents and practitioners if in doubt, whilst also acknowledging that children's inexperience meant that

their assent or consent was not fully informed. This ethos of respectful research underpinned the methods through which data were gathered.

DATA GATHERING METHODS

In taking a cultural historical orientation;

“The researcher enters the research site knowing that the dynamics of each institutional setting need to be mapped and understood if the conditions for development can be observed and interpreted” (Fleer, 2008, p.109).

This study therefore required two main data sets to construct an all-encompassing data corpus (Fitzgerald et al., 2013). Observational data, recorded through written field notes and by video, sought to capture the happenings in ‘activity settings’ (chapter 3) in which children were engaged with texts. Observational data provided a means to respond to each of the specific research sub-questions addressing the domains of children’s intentions, identities and affective relations in activity settings. Secondly, a supplementary data set sought the perspectives of children, parents, practitioners and myself as a reflexive participant observer, and was comprised of resultant data from interviews, focus groups, documents, activities with children and my reflexive journal. Its purpose was to provide insight into why activity settings unfolded as they did. The supplementary data set enhanced analysis of the observational data set, offering a wider angled lens through which to address the domains of inquiry and develop theoretical understandings of children’s literacy experiences.

Participant observation

The potential of a first-hand view and experience of naturally occurring events makes observation the mainstay of ethnographic methods (Angrosino, 2005), and the obvious choice of data collection methods in this study; however, it was not adopted without critical consideration.

My role as a participant observer involved more than ‘seeing’ and ‘hearing’; it also involved ‘getting a feel’ of the activity setting (Cohen et al., 2011). Cultural immersion is integral to ethnographic methodologies but, as discussed earlier, makes the acknowledgement of researcher subjectivity essential; the ‘experience’ of each activity setting observed, and the meaning attached to it was refracted through my own unique prism of *perezhivanie*, thus, intensifying the need for reflexivity.

The extent of my participation in the activity settings observed varied, sometimes sitting quietly on the periphery of children's activity, and other times fully immersed in the evolving interactions. Four data items involved minimal participation when I set the video camera to record and moved away to another part of the nursery classroom. While maintaining that observational data were of activity settings as they naturally unfolded, rather than of situations contrived for research purposes (Punch, 2012), I also accept that through participating, the research agenda inevitably contributed to and influenced events. For example, two participant children appeared to perceive my interest in them and realised that they could gain my undivided attention more easily than that of other practitioners, which influenced their interactions and choice of activity. And during the first phase of fieldwork, some practitioners, with helpful intentions, made a point of drawing participant children into activity involving written texts for me to observe; although, as my research activity became the norm, this dwindled.

Initial observational data gathering recorded a broad range of children's activities and was not confined to 'literacy events'. This gave a sense of each child's interests and preferences for participation, and ensured equal time was dedicated to each focal child, rather than focusing on those more inclined to engage in literacy activity. As the study progressed, I became more selective and focused on observing activity that involved written and multimodal texts, to ensure data gathered were relevant to the research questions. During practitioner-led group activities, I focused my observation on one focal child per session, based on the setting's planning system which documented what type of activity would be taking place in each group (although these were used flexibly). During the free-flow play sessions, I quietly monitored where the focal children were, and when appropriate, observed and participated in their spontaneous and volitional activity involving texts. Whilst this meant that when involved in one child's activity, I inevitably missed opportunities to observe the activity of others, across each fieldwork block, I aimed to dedicate equal time to observing each of the children.

Recording observations

Observations of children's literacy events were recorded as data through a combination of written field notes and video recordings. On occasions when video recording was not ethically or practically viable, observational fieldnotes were documented briefly in situ, and subsequently transformed into narrative accounts with reflective notes, creating 'stand-alone' data items. The disadvantage, as Denscombe (2014) cautions were issues of perception and memory; seeing only what was looked for and filtering out what was not perceived as important at the time. Most often, however, observational fieldnotes complemented video

data items, enabling documentation of peripheral information, or to mitigate for poor quality audio recordings due to the busyness of the nursery environment. In addition to observational fieldnotes, a fieldnote chronology was compiled for each participant child (Cohen et al., 2011). These were generated in parallel to my reflexive research journal and recorded children's fleeting moments of engagement with a text, or significant passing comments, made either to me, other children or made openly to practitioners.

Video technology offered a powerful tool to capture the complexities and nuances of children's literacy experiences (Fitzgerald et al., 2013); video data therefore comprised the greater part of the observational data set. As Flewitt (2006) states; "using video to collect data reveals the multimodal dynamism of classroom interaction" (p.29); the capacity for multiple viewings both mitigates issues of memory and facilitates detailed examination through multiple lenses and by multiple analysts, thus, offering a greater thoroughness of analysis. In addition, the functions of qualitative data analysis software (discussed in chapter 5) meant that small units of video data could be scrutinised and coded multiple times, without being separated from the surrounding data and without being reduced to transcription and undergoing the inevitable loss of meaning (Rapley, 2008).

In critique of video ethnography, Schuck and Kearney (2006) question the extent to which the presence of the video camera alters peoples' behaviours, and thus claims of naturalistic research. Pink (2007) however, disagrees asserting that during longitudinal studies in classroom environments participants quickly become accustomed to the camera and are too involved in their everyday activities to alter their behaviours. My experiences of fieldwork resonated with the views of Pink; the use of cameras was commonplace in the nursery and my small handheld video cameras, which resembled mobile phones did not seem to appear out of place; arguably, mobile technology has become almost invisible because of its ubiquity.

The combination of tools to record observational data was invaluable. As Angrosino (2005) asserts, what is captured in video footage should not be privileged; "at the expense of the lived experience as the ethnographer has personally known it" (p.742). Accordingly, fieldnotes, reflective notes and video data were analysed concurrently.

Eliciting children's voices

Recognising children as valuable sources of knowledge and 'experts in their own lives' (Clark, 2017), the study needed insight into how children viewed themselves in relations in a literacy event, but also, an understanding of why they held those views, and how these impacted on the nature of their experiences. However, the age at which young children can engage in metacognition is contested (Lewis, 2017), and as a largely unobservable process, I required

children's accounts. I am committed to the belief that children are competent and capable of expressing their views, when we as 'listeners' acknowledge, what Magaguzzi (1996) refers to as, 'the hundred languages of children', and dialogue on their terms, to; "actively seek negotiation of meaning" (Hviid, 2008, p.156). Therefore, I employed four creative methods to capture children's perspectives; puppet mediated interviews, video stimulated dialogue, photo mediated dialogue and object mediated dialogue.

Periodically throughout the fieldwork stage, I invited children to join me in these flexible, playful activities aiming to capture their perspectives. Not all children accepted my invitation on each occasion, and those who part-took in each, did so with varying levels of involvement and interest, co-constructing the activity and taking it in divergent directions. As anticipated, of the resultant data, only a limited selection provided the coveted lens into children's metacognitive processes; nonetheless the insights those provided were valuable.

Puppet mediated interviews

Puppet interviews used a particularly expressive giraffe puppet as stimulus for dialogue. A key issue in eliciting children's perspectives in research is adult dominance of the communication (MacNaughton et al., 2007). Puppets potentially reduce the power differential through enabling dialogue to playfully evolve (Greig et al., 2007). For that reason, during puppet interviews I positioned children as authoritative, by explaining that 'Gerry' was very young, and that he had seen children using pens and paper or looking at books and comics at nursery. I went on to explain that he wanted to know what they were doing and how he could learn to do these things.

Children participated at varying levels, Elijah and Finn engaged briefly before wanting to play with the puppet themselves, and whilst Anya spoke about her own activities, she pointed out to me that Gerry was not real and could not learn to read or write. However, amongst the resultant data were some salient comments.

Video stimulated dialogue

Video stimulated recall (Morgan, 2007), or video stimulated reflective dialogue (Lewis, 2017) involves the researcher and participant jointly reviewing video data as a meaningful stimulus for dialogue. Encouraged by reported outcomes of Morgan (2007), who found that 3-year-old children were able to recall some elements of their thinking 48 hours after an event, the method was used in both the pilot and main studies.

As an active participant in many of the activity settings recorded, I felt that in reviewing video with me alone, children would assume shared understandings, and not see the need to explain the situation. Therefore, each child was asked firstly whether they would like to view videos,

and if so, whether they wanted to show videos to their parents and family, their friends at nursery, or their key person. Anya, Amir and Elijah chose to share videos at home, and just Ben chose to share with his friends at nursery.

When using video stimulated recall, usually it is the researcher who decides what is viewed, hence it is unknown whether the selected clips are those of most interest to children (Lewis, 2017). Therefore, my laptop was set to display each video file as a large icon, enabling children to make a more informed choice (although some videos had been removed as they included close up images or the voices of other children in the classroom). Hence, the approach offered children a degree of control of the activity, and Anya especially gave a descriptive commentary of her activities. However, the approach reduced opportunities to ask children more targeted open questions about their literate selves. Nonetheless, when opportunity arose in the natural flow of the dialogue, I asked children:

- To discuss what they were doing in the activity (exploring, for example whether they considered their mark making to be 'writing')
- Why they had chosen particular resources or texts.
- How they were feeling during the activity, and the elements that they enjoyed or disliked.

All but one video stimulated dialogues were video recorded (the exception was due to other children being present at the home, for whom there was no consent to video).

Photo mediated dialogue

These activities took place during the third phase of fieldwork; children were invited, individually, to discuss with me a collection of still images, created from screen shots of video recordings. Previous research with children has reported how photographs can prompt memory and mediate dialogue (Meo, 2010; Cappello, 2005). Unlike video, which takes the viewer on a journey through the episode, the advantage of the still image is its power to make one stop and contemplate a moment in time (Pain, 2012). Cappello (2005) using this method with 6-9-year-olds reported enhanced recall, with a number of, '*oh yeah*' moments as children spontaneously elaborated and reflected on thoughts.

Approximately 15 images were included per child; selection aimed to include each child engaged in a variety of literacy events individually, with peers or with adults, and in both the home and preschool settings. The images were spread out, in a quiet area of the classroom, allowing children to browse and initiate discussion on images of interest to them. I frequently found the discussion, which was video recorded, evolved spontaneously, and when questioning was appropriate, the visual stimuli enabled very open questions such as, '*tell me*

about this', facilitating natural discussion. All the children accepted my invitation, although Elijah wanted to include his friend in the discussion, which subsequently evolved in a direction less relevant to the research agenda.

Object mediated dialogue

This approach drew on the notion of objects as 'cultural probes' (Woodward, 2016). Materials are at the core of literacy practices (Pahl and Rowsell, 2013), and thus, as Rowsell (2011) states; "Artefacts and the stories that they sustain hold promise as a research tool to access information that might not be possible through observation, document analysis, even interviews" (p.332).

The activity used a selection of everyday items as stimuli for dialogue; I invited each child to explore a bag of artefacts associated with everyday cultural literacy practices. Based on the information gained from parent interviews, I slightly tweaked the contents for each child aiming to make the objects personally relevant, however I acknowledge that the selection was based on my interpretation of children's cultural literacy practices. The aim was to encourage each child to discuss life events relating to the object to elicit insight into what the object signified to them, how it related to their literacy practices and how it mediated enactments of identity. The objects are listed below.

Take away menu	Birthday card
Smart phone	Pen
Flyer for a Christmas community event	Small picture book
Young adult's novel	Shopping receipt
Notebook	DVD (in sleeve)
Library card	Flyer for Lidl promotion
Tesco's packaging	DS Game
Children's sports club advert	

Elijah declined the invitation, and Ben and Fynn decided to take part together. Children were presented with the bag, then given time and space to explore the contents; open questions were asked only after an interest had been shown in the object. Video recordings enabled analysis of children's responses; their verbal comments tended to focus on the item's function and the place and people associated with it, and observation of how children handled objects offered some insight into cultural practices with the text / object.

In summary, these methods collectively generated dialogue with children; while it cannot be claimed that they provided a clear window into children's perspectives, salient comments provided glimpses of children's fluid and evolving self-perceptions as text users.

Eliciting parents' perspectives

An initial interview was arranged with a parent of each family soon after fieldwork commenced; in all cases, the child's mother agreed to meet with me. While the main purpose was to gather data pertinent to the research questions, interviews also provided an early opportunity to forge good-quality research relationships with parents. Interviews were semi-structured, using open questions from a flexible interview guide (Braun and Clark, 2013). All were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The open questions and prompts sought information regarding:

- Parents views of their child's general character, interests, likes and dislikes.
- Parent's and family literacy practices and the extents and ways in which children were involved in these.
- How parents viewed their own, and the nursery's role in promoting children's literacy.
- The literacy related materials and technology available to children at home.
- How parents described their children's literacy development.

Acknowledging the influence of 'place' in interview responses, I offered to visit parents at home, or to meet on nursery premises and schedule interviews around parents bringing children to the nursery session. All parents chose to meet at the nursery, where a meeting room was made available.

Taking Denscombe's (2014) advice, I firstly aimed to build rapport, and began emphasising that I was interested in their detailed knowledge of their child, and hence, began by asking parents to tell me about their child. I endeavoured to engage in active listening, valuing comments and allowing interviewees to talk on issues that seemed important to them. As the interview progressed, questions, while still open, became more focused on the more specific information sought. As expected, each interview evolved very differently as conversations naturally evolved, however, it is acknowledged that cross-case compatibility is therefore not possible (Bryman, 2012).

Ongoing informal conversations with parents throughout the fieldwork stage were recorded in the fieldnote chronologies. Often parents would spontaneously tell me about their children's literacy related activities at home, such as writing letters to Father Christmas, new favourite books, or new apps they were using. These provided valuable supplementary data in that they

often seemed to convey parents' views of their children's progress and elucidate aspects of literacy that parents most valued.

Eliciting practitioners' perspectives

During the pilot study, a semi-structure interview with the participant practitioner had offered very limited insight into the nursery's culture and ethos relating to literacy provision and practice. Reflecting on this, I decided, in the main study, to organise a focus group discussion with all participating practitioners.

The aims were to gain a sense of how the nursery ethos, practices and provision were shaping children's experience with texts through:

- Exploring dominant discourses regarding literacy pedagogy.
- Exploring the collective 'view' of young children as literacy users.
- Gauging both individual practitioners', and collective views on the nursery's policy on literacy provision and practices.
- Exploring the impact of, and views on national level literacy policy and curriculum.

My intention during the focus group was to act as a facilitator, opening topics for discussion, rather than asking questions. A focus group guide (appendix H) was drawn up beforehand but used flexibly. As proposed by Braun and Clark (2013) this approach seemed more 'naturalistic' than individual interviews. The conversation flowed effortlessly as participants openly shared their views; disagreement of opinion and practices seemed to be welcomed with intrigue and led to participants freely elaborating and justifying their positions as they co-constructed views and meanings. The data therefore offered insight into practitioner's perspectives, and into why they held certain views (Morgan, 2006).

Throughout the fieldwork, practitioners also frequently engaged with me in informal conversations, particularly when I returned after time away, practitioners would recall anecdotes regarding case-study children's literacy activities. These were recorded as field notes, acknowledging they were 'second-hand' accounts. Many such conversations elucidated practitioner's views of children at a point in time, and the aspects of children's literacy practices that they valued.

During June 2018, when assessments and report writing were taking place, I returned to the setting to speak to each child's key person once again. These audio-recorded conversations lasted about ten minutes; practitioners were asked to imagine they were speaking to the reception class teacher receiving each participant child, and to summarise their literacy

learning, interests, and progress. The purpose of these data was to provide a complementary and comparative view of each child's literacy experiences, to those simultaneously being constructed through early data analysis.

Documental Data

Educational settings, such as nurseries, are 'self-documenting' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.121), meaning that practitioners engage in the production and dissemination of written materials. Children's progress files were compiled by each child's key person to document practitioners' observations of children; they were used in the nursery as evidence of the child's progress and attainment, and to some extent, used in the planning of provision. Analysis of these documents provided a valuable insight into the aspects of children's activities that practitioners deemed worthy of noting, and thus indicated the sorts of literacy activities valued. Termly assessments of children's attainment, based on Early Years Outcomes (DfE, 2013), also provided some insight into how practitioners viewed each child's capabilities.

In addition, analysis of the preschool's policy for literacy also offered another view of the ideology and philosophy underpinning practices and provision. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), however, argue that while documental data is essential to ethnographic study, they must always be viewed with consideration for the contexts in which they are produced. Such documents present a version of reality, constructed for a purpose, which must be understood. The literacy policy, for example could be viewed as a vision for the preschool's literacy provision or viewed as a document constructed to meet statutory requirements. Of interest in this study were the ways in which these data both substantiated and contradicted those gathered through other methods, deepening and nuancing the understandings under construction.

In combination, these data gathering methods generated a sizable and multi-dimensional data corpus for analysis and interpretation; the analytic process is explicated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 4 has detailed the study design, setting out the longitudinal multiple ethnographic case-studies approach. It has shown how the research questions are firstly grounded in the study's cultural-historical framework, secondly how they encapsulate and examine young children's literacy experiences and thirdly, how they potentially speak to the gaps identified in

the literature and knowledge of early childhood literacy. Details of the research sites, participants and the methods used to generate data have offered the reader insight into the study contexts. The aim of this chapter has been to show the congruencies between the research paradigm, the constructivist ontology, the interpretivist epistemology, the qualitative methodology, the research questions and the specific data gathering methods. Chapter 5 will now set out the framework and processes through which data were analysed, interpreted and represented.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY PART 2 - ANALYSIS

This chapter guides the reader through the process through which data were analysed, and how themes were generated. There are multiple recognised approaches to qualitative data analysis. The task however, was to construct an analytic framework and tools that were 'fit for purpose' (Cohen et al., 2011). Therefore, it was pertinent to firstly construct a clear understanding of what the analytic framework needed to achieve to effectively address the research aim and questions; its purpose was to facilitate:

- Multi-layered analytic / interpretive coding of data at micro, meso and macro levels;
- Identification of patterns, contiguities, consistencies, and contradictions in the data;
- Construction of detailed, ideographic, interpretative accounts illustrating the focal children's literacy experiences;
- Abstraction of substantive themes through which theorisations of young children's literacy experiences could be developed.

The analytic process is presented here as 'phases', however, I firstly stress that it was an ongoing, recursive process. It is impossible, arguably, to engage in ethnographic fieldwork without giving thought and meaning to data as it is gathered, and interpretations continue to evolve during the writing up of research. However, throughout the more systematic analytic phases it was important to be clear about the units of analysis and understand that no single unit alone can generate meaning; the units must 'fit together' and the different data sets must 'speak' to one another (Silverman, 2010). Applying the concept of 'nested' units of analysis, (Hennessy et al., 2016; Rojas-Drummond et al., 2013) I viewed children's literacy experience as nested in interactions, transactions and relations in the activity setting, nested in wider societal and institutional practices. Therefore, analysis took place at:

- Micro level – child's perezhivanie, understood as a refractive process (as detailed in chapter 3)
- Meso level – dynamic relations in the activity setting of the literacy event.
- Macro level – related institutional and societal practices.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

To accommodate the multiple data sets and multi-layered analysis, a thematic approach was taken, which drew upon the 6-phase model proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), and simultaneously was informed by Saldaña's (2016) 'streamlined codes to theory model'; both are detailed in the following sections. Braun and Clarke, in 2006 argued that thematic analysis was poorly defined, lacked kudos, and was frequently criticised as lacking rigour; the authors, in their 2006 paper, and 2013 book addressed those critiques, demarcating the approach, and providing structured, yet flexible guidelines. As with other approaches to qualitative data analysis, such as content analysis, grounded theory or discourse analysis (Denscombe, 2014), thematic analysis involves intensively coding data, however the focus or purpose of coding is more adaptable in this thematic model. Braun and Clarke's (2006) highly cited paper, has established a recognised and rigorous, yet pliable model of thematic analysis, which was appropriated and adapted for this study.

Thematic analysis can be approached inductively or theoretically (Braun and Clarke, 2013); rather than seeing these approaches as a dichotomy however, this study's analytic framework incorporated both aspects. The coding of data was approached inductively insofar as codes and themes were generated through immersion in the data, rather than constructed prior to analysis based on existing theory. However, theorising of children's identities, affective relations and intentions, viewed through the lenses of *perezhivanie*, subjectivity and activity settings was well established at the point that systematic analysis began. Combined with my epistemology and the research questions, this theorisation clearly shaped the points of interest, codes and themes being generated in, and from the data. Thus, analysis involved, simultaneously inductive and deductive techniques (Punch, 2012).

DATA SETS

During fieldwork, data were all 'processed' promptly. Fieldnotes were typed up, interviews transcribed, documents scanned, and all video data items were viewed and categorised, allowing each data item to be systematically catalogued. As previously discussed, the longitudinal and ethnographic study design generated an observational data set and a supplementary data set, which are summarised in table 3 below.

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF DATA CORPUS AND DATA SETS

Observational data set					
Observational data items (Recorded by video or fieldnotes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amir – 49 data items – Total 5h 3m• Anya - 53 data items – Total 5h 19m• Ben – 36 data items – Total 3h 45m• Elijah – 52 data items – Total 5h 41m• Fynn – 41 data items – Total 3h 35m (see appendix I for children’s data set summaries)				
Fieldnote chronologies (FNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amir – 31 entries• Anya – 27 entries• Ben – 29 entries• Elijah – 35 entries• Fynn – 41 entries				
Supplementary data set					
Parent interview transcripts (PIT)	Interview duration: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amir – 28:40 minutes• Anya – 22:19 minutes• Ben – 35:20 minutes• Elijah – 27:00 minutes• Fynn – 24:20 minutes				
Practitioner focus group (PFG)	Transcript of focus group discussion : duration 46 minutes				
Key person final interview transcripts (KPIT)	Interview duration <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amir – 11.12 minutes• Anya – 08.55 minutes• Ben – 15.20 minutes• Elijah – 10.01 minutes• Fynn – 7.56 minutes				
Children’s perspective activities:	Amir	Anya	Elijah	Fynn	Ben
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Puppet mediated interviews (PMI),	X	X	X	X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Video stimulated dialogue (VSD),	X	X	X		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photo mediation (PH)		X	X	X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Object mediated dialogue (OMD).	X	X	X		X
Documental data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scanned copy of each child’s nursery ‘learning journal’ file.• Nursery’s literacy policy• Nursery planning documents				
Reflexive research journal	Kept throughout the fieldwork stage.				

Qualitative data, gathered in audio or image-based formats are commonly transformed into written transcripts prior to analysis; however, in this study, I decided to code and analyse video

data directly. Before detailing the analytic phases, the following section will explain and justify that decision, and discuss the software that enabled this.

Working with video data

As discussed in chapter 4, video data captured the multimodal ensembles of children's participation more effectively than observational fieldnotes. The challenge is how to account for multimodality in the analysis and representation of research data. Flewitt (2006) points to several large influential studies in the UK in the 2000s which acknowledged multimodality but failed to adequately account for it during analysis. With a focus on text and talk, conventional transcription, even with the inclusion of supplementary information through image, tends to privilege the verbal mode. I argue that the majority of this study's video data set can only be meticulously examined through detailed examination of the multimodal ensemble.

It has been argued that it is necessary to transcribe speech for analysis (e.g. Denscombe, 2014; Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff, 2010), and Flewitt (2006) argues that; "some form of systematic transcription is needed to make data readily accessible to the researcher and to ensure accounts of data are accurate and credible representations of the phenomena studied" (p.34). Researchers have effectively used "dynamic texts" or multimodal transcripts, often in the form of grids, to describe the simultaneous use of multiple modes; some include pictorial representations through video stills or line drawings for example, to enable systematic analysis and representation of data (e.g. Cowen, 2014; Flewitt, 2011; Payler, 2007). Nonetheless, when video data is re-represented in another medium, however carefully, inevitably some of the richness is lost (Plowman and Stephen, 2008); the multimodal ensemble will always be greater than the sum of its parts.

Therefore, using the affordance of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), video data were coded and analysed directly, rather than indirectly through transcripts; this is detailed in the following section. However, it is not possible practically or ethically, for the reader of this thesis to view video data, meaning that it was necessary to construct representations of data; these were subsequently created to explicate the analytic process and justify findings and interpretation.

Computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)

Potentially, computer software can assist the qualitative researcher with multiple dimensions of the analytic process, although, according to Seale (2010) CAQDAS is predominantly used for

'code and retrieve' purposes. Flick (2009) adds that the technology's focus on coding may detract from the deeper analytic work of hermeneutically understanding and generating meanings from data. Thus, CAQDAS was one of the tools I used in the analytic process.

The software, 'Dedoose' was selected for several reasons. It is web-based, meaning the project could be accessed on any compatible computer. Data security was ensured through encrypted pass key entry at user level, coupled with project specific encryption. In comparison to the other CAQDAS systems trialled (Nvivo and ATLAS ti) Dedoose was, in my view, most intuitive, it efficiently organised data files, and enabled layers of codes and analytic memos to be attached to audio/video, and text-based data. Audio/video data was segmented into excerpts, ranging in length from 2 seconds to several minutes. Excerpts could overlap meaning that a portion of video could feature in multiple excerpts where appropriate, to ensure the moments and context surrounding the significant occurrence were not lost. Excerpts could be extracted and viewed independently or viewed within the video enabling a 'zooming in and out' between the minutia and the whole.

However, as Seale (2010) and Flick (2009) alluded to, Dedoose also had limitations; while it produced visual representations of frequency of code application and code co-occurrence, it does not provide a system through which the analyst can represent her analytic thinking. Hence, word processing software, PowerPoint, and 'pen and paper' methods were used alongside Dedoose at various stages of the analysis.

STAGES OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The thematic model, developed by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013), provided the framework upon which I structured analysis of data. The authors propose six analytic phases, as follows:

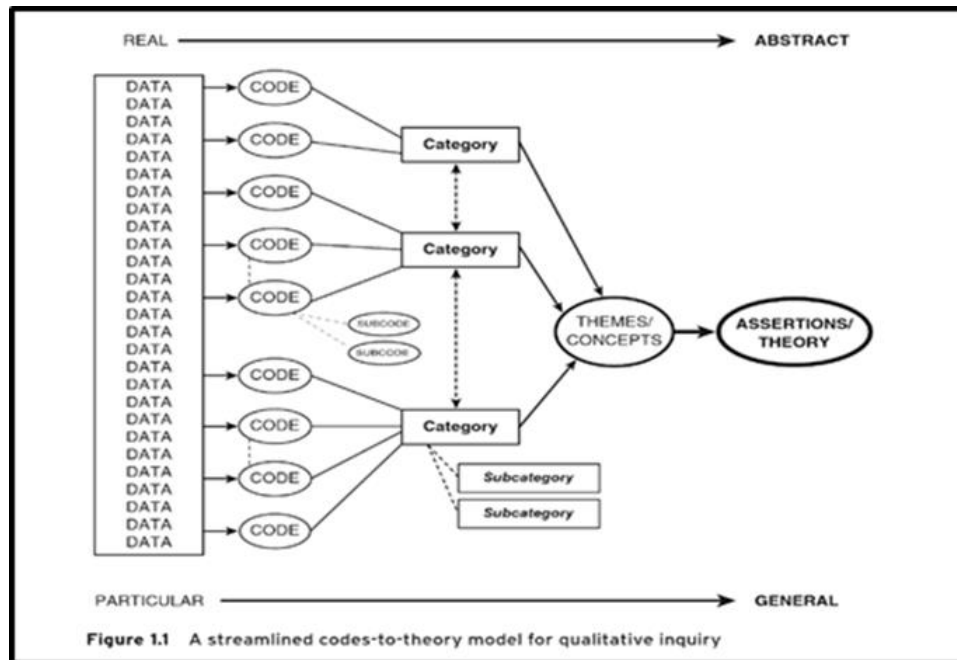
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.87)

In addition, my theorisation of the analytic process was influenced by Saldaña (2016), who illustrates qualitative data analysis as a process in which meaning is generated at increasingly higher levels of abstraction, moving through the stages of generation of data, codes,

categories, themes and cumulating in theoretical assertions about the phenomena under study. However, given the study's constructivist epistemological stance, rather than aiming to generate 'theoretical assertions', I chose to use the term 'theoretical propositions'. Acknowledging the multiplicity of lenses through which to view children's literacy experience, this study proposes '*one way to view*', not '*the way to view*' children's literacy experiences, thus contributing to the 'bigger picture' in the field of Early Childhood Literacy. Saldaña's model is depicted in figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1: A STREAMLINED CODES-TO-THEORY MODEL FOR QUALITATIVE INQUIRY (SALDAÑA, 2016, P.14)



The authors of both models discuss the recursive nature of thematic analysis, and while I document the study's analytic process here in stages, I stress that it was not a linear process. Thoughts of potential themes arose in the early stages and the revision of codes continued into the latter stages; nonetheless, the following sections detail the study's six stages of analysis (adapted from Braun and Clarke's, (2006) model).

Prior to formal analysis, all data were systematically catalogued and labelled, according to the child it related to, whether it was observational or supplementary data, the type of literacy event involved, the date gathered, and the location (see appendix I for catalogues of each child's data set).

Stage one - Familiarisation with data

Having engaged in immersive data gathering and concurrently processed data, I had experiential knowledge of each data item. The familiarisation phase involved an analytical

review of each observational data item, and noting of initial ‘points of interest’ relating to each domain of inquiry, or strands of research questions; these included both overall impressions and highlighted small details, at both tangible and interpretive levels (See examples in appendix J). These notes were enriching, and key to familiarisation, but as Braun and Clarke (2013) caution, tended to reflect what I brought to the data. It was crucial, at this point, not to begin drawing conclusions (Guest et al., 2014).

Data reduction is an integral and ongoing part of qualitative data analysis (Guest et al., 2014), but must be undertaken reflexively to ensure data selected for deeper level analysis are representative and not biased towards confirming a preferred perspective (Cohen et al., 2011). Hence, this phase simultaneously involved methodically evaluating each data item to assess firstly, the significance of the written text in the activity setting (at what level was it a ‘literacy event’), secondly, the quality of the audio / video recording and thirdly the visibility and weight of evidence of children’s affective relations, identity co-constructions and intentions. Based on these criteria, each data item was rated from 1 – 5 for its relevance to the research questions and phenomena under study. Consequently, the intensive systematic coding of phase two began with higher rated data items (those rated as 4 or 5) and became progressively more selective, meaning that lower rated items were drawn upon to support, contradict or nuance an emerging theme or issue.

Stage two – Generating codes and analytic memos

Working systematically through higher-rated data items, this phase involved intensively coding data. There are divergent views and some ambiguity regarding the purpose and function of coding in qualitative data analysis. For example, Silver and Lewins (2014) propose that; “coding is often an integral part of the analytic process, but it is not analysis in itself” (p.34), however Miles et al. (2014) disagree stating; “we believe that coding is deep reflection about and, thus, deep analysis and interpretation of the data’s meanings” (p.72). Furthermore, diverse terminology is used to distinguish between types of coding in research, such as open / axial, objective / heuristic, descriptive / interpretive. Saldaña (2016) however, offers some clarity, in responding to the question ‘what is a code?’, he proposes;

“A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and / or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data.” (p.4)

Taking this definition, the coding process involved attaching units of meaning to segments of data in relation to the specific research questions, examining the focal children’s intentions, identities and affective relations in literacy events, as conceptualised through the cultural-

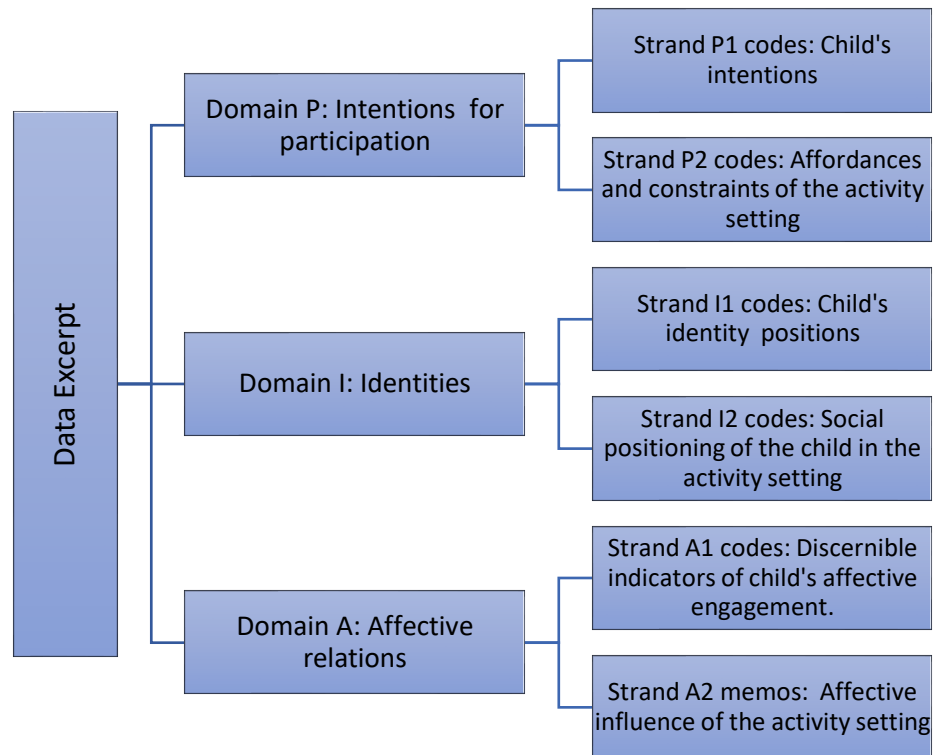
historical lenses. This process enabled me to distil from the broader activity setting, aspects of the child's activity and aspects of the situation that appeared significant to relations between child and environment and their process of *perezhivanie* (Michell, 2016).

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) distinction between semantic (explicit in the data) and latent (interpreted from the data) codes, the approach taken was to assign more latent codes, insofar as codes went beyond simply labelling what was explicit in the data, but rather coding was a technique to reduce and translate the raw data into language that was meaningful to the inquiry, at varying levels of abstraction.

This meant that initially three domains of codes were generated, relating to each strand of the research questions. Codes generated for the domains of intentions and identities assigned meaning both at micro level, (i.e. the child's *perezhivanie* and subjectivity), and at meso level (activity setting relations). The domain of affective relations was coded at micro level. However, meso level codes required drawing heavily on ethnographic knowledge and supplementary data. This required analytic work that went beyond what was discernible in the data excerpt alone, meaning that codes could not be applied in the same manner. Hence analytic memos⁵ were generated which offered scope to explain, or question, why particular meanings had been drawn from the data . The initial coding structure for each data excerpt is illustrated in figure 2 below.

⁵ Analytic memos were comments about the data excerpt which recorded why and how aspects in the data related to codes or other data excerpts (Saldaña, 2016)

FIGURE 2: CODING STRUCTURE



Working recursively through the higher rated data items, codes were generated, defined, re-defined, expanded, combined or split to best represent the meaning being constructed from the data. Throughout this phase 356 data excerpts were extracted from 32 video data items, through which 115 codes and 242 analytic memos were generated. The resultant 'codebook' is shown in appendix K.

As discussed earlier, reflexivity was ongoing, but particularly crucial in coding children's affective relations. Heeding Clarke and Hoggett's (2009) advice, I reflected upon how I could be sure that the children's behaviours I coded and named as 'affects' were not just an imposition of my own affective engagement with the data. Inspired by Elfer's (2012) writing on psychoanalytic methods of observation, (in which a facilitator helps the observer to review the impact of their own emotional experience on their interpretations), I returned to nursery practitioners to review my coding.

Each child's key person reviewed three, randomly selected video data items with me. Focusing on affective engagement, they gave their overarching thoughts on the episode before being asked to describe the affect discernible in the child's behaviours. Finally, I asked each to critique my coding, and discuss the extent to which they agreed with my interpretations. Practitioner's and my own overviews and coding were then

documented side by side, (example in appendix L) to consider consistencies and discrepancies. The aim was to offer a degree of validity and ensure rigour.

Stage three: Revising and categorising codes

After having segmented and deconstructed the data into small units of relevant meaning through coding, stage three began the process of reconstructing those units in a way that conceptually organised the first cycle codes (Saldaña, 2016). Codes were interrogated to generate understandings of what they revealed about the data in relation to the research questions and phenomena of study. During this phase, Braun and Clarke (2013) refer to 'seeking patterns', positing that pattern-based analysis is driven by the notion that codes that recur across a dataset capture something meaningful. The features of Dedoose facilitated an overview of code frequency and code co-occurrence, although, as Braun and Clarke (2013) also stress, it was code saliency, rather than frequency that was important. Furthermore, deciding which codes were deemed salient is dependent on the researcher's foci during analysis, and again reflexivity was crucial.

Seeking patterns and generating categories was considered a step toward, or an exploration of potential themes, and thus, was a cyclic process, requiring layers of refinement and validation through re-immersion in the data. The limitations of Dedoose became apparent; while the software allowed for the merging of codes, it did not allow them to be subsequently unmerged, meaning that the original coding could not be revisited. Braun and Clarke (2006) caution not to abandon anything at this stage; hence, to maintain the first cycle coding, this phase was developed through 'thematic mapping' (Miles et al. 2014). Additionally, codes did not fit neatly into one category or another, but rather intertwined, forming a web of meaning, thus, flow charts and 'analytic maps' were created using PowerPoint software to capture relationships of codes to potential categories and evolving themes (Figures 3, 4 and 5); the functions of 'PowerPoint' allowed my developing analytic thinking to be visually represented on multiple slides, elements could be moved around as potential categories were explored. Using thematic maps and Dedoose concurrently enabled me to quickly collate all excerpts where particular codes had been applied to review whether developing themes seemed to 'ring true' across the data set. Although the interrelationship between domains of codes were becoming evident, at this point categories were generated within each domain of inquiry.

FIGURE 3: CODE TO CATEGORY MAP - DOMAIN P: INTENTIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

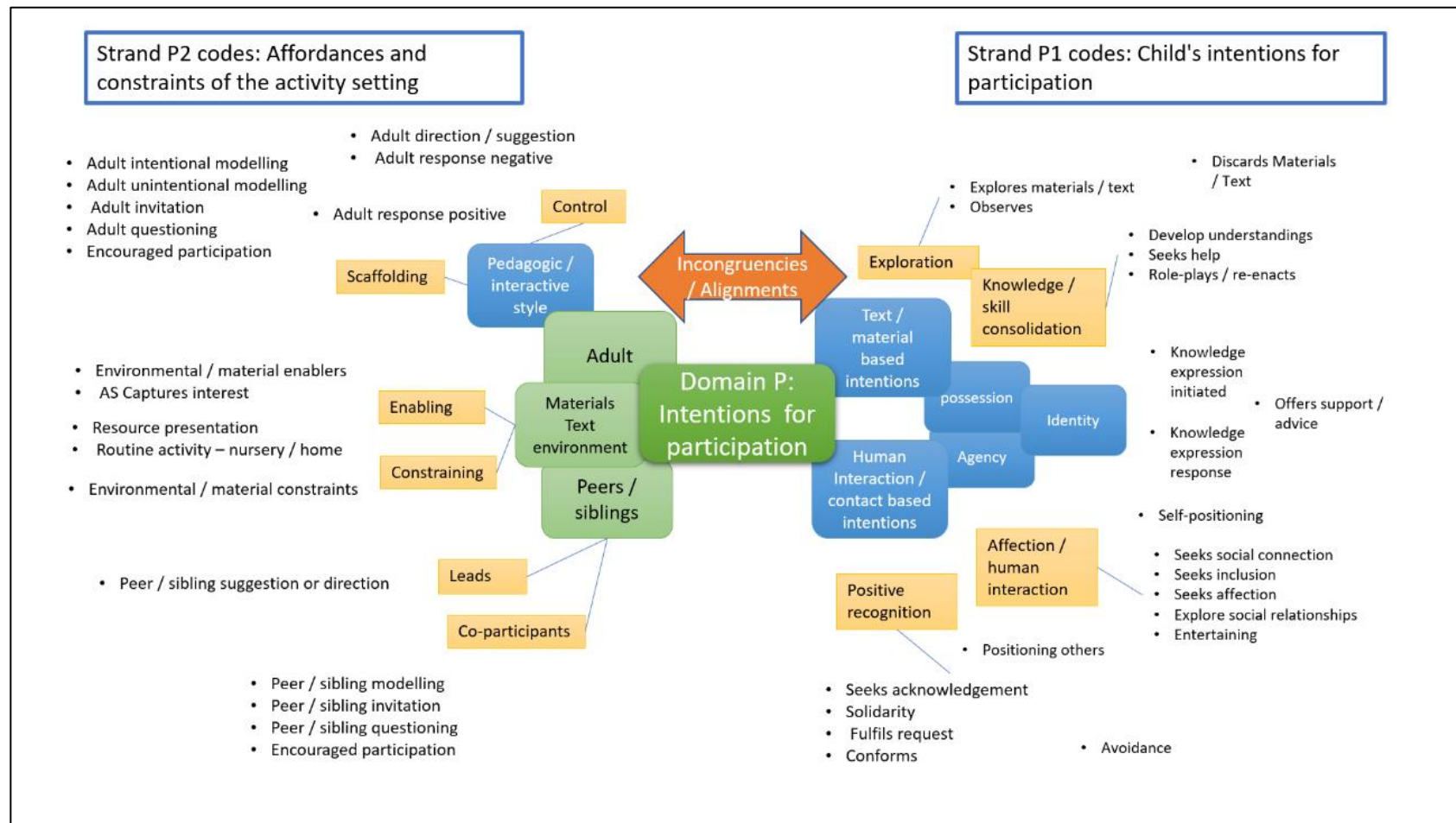


FIGURE 4: CODE TO CATEGORY MAP - DOMAIN I: IDENTITIES

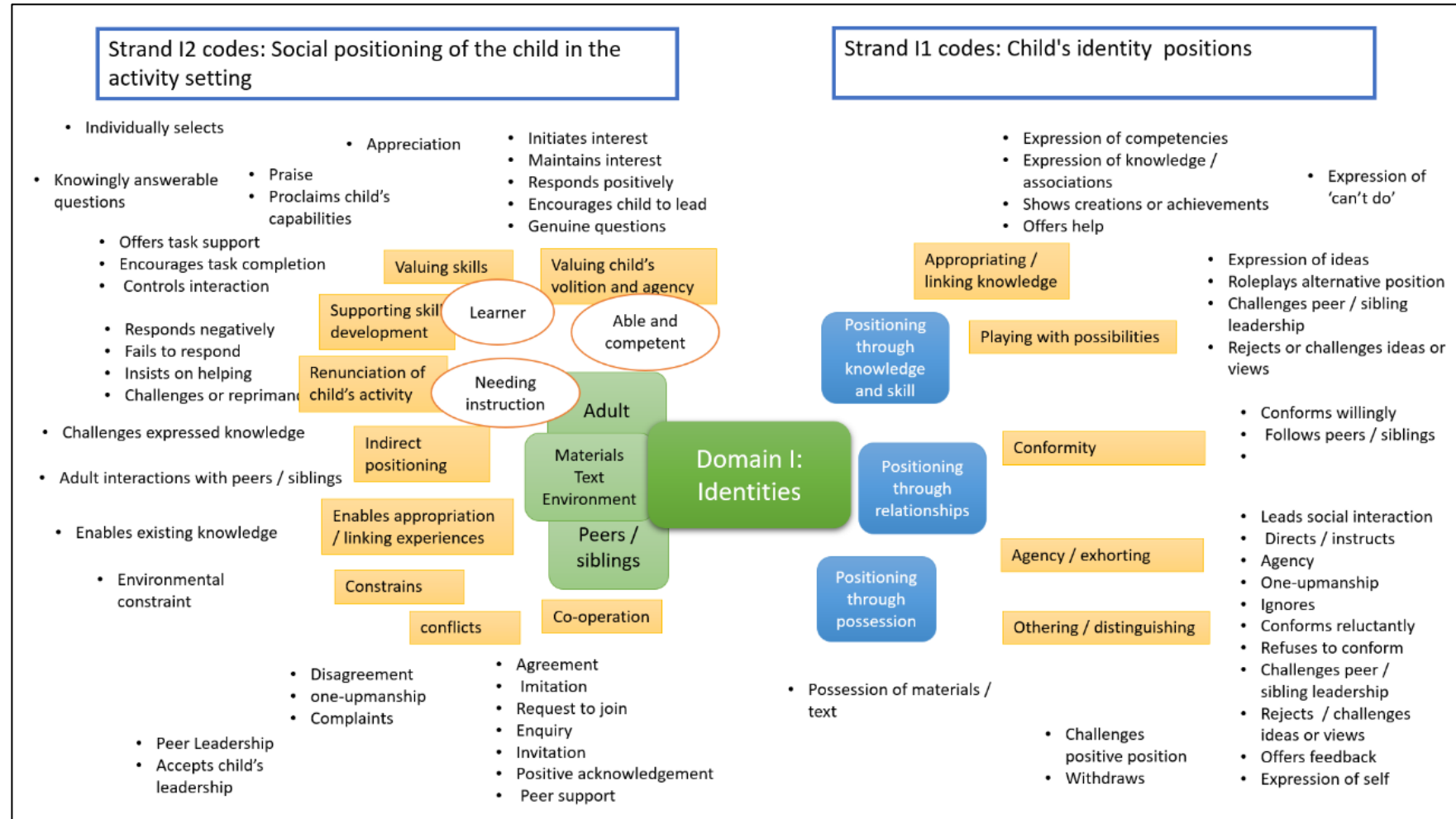
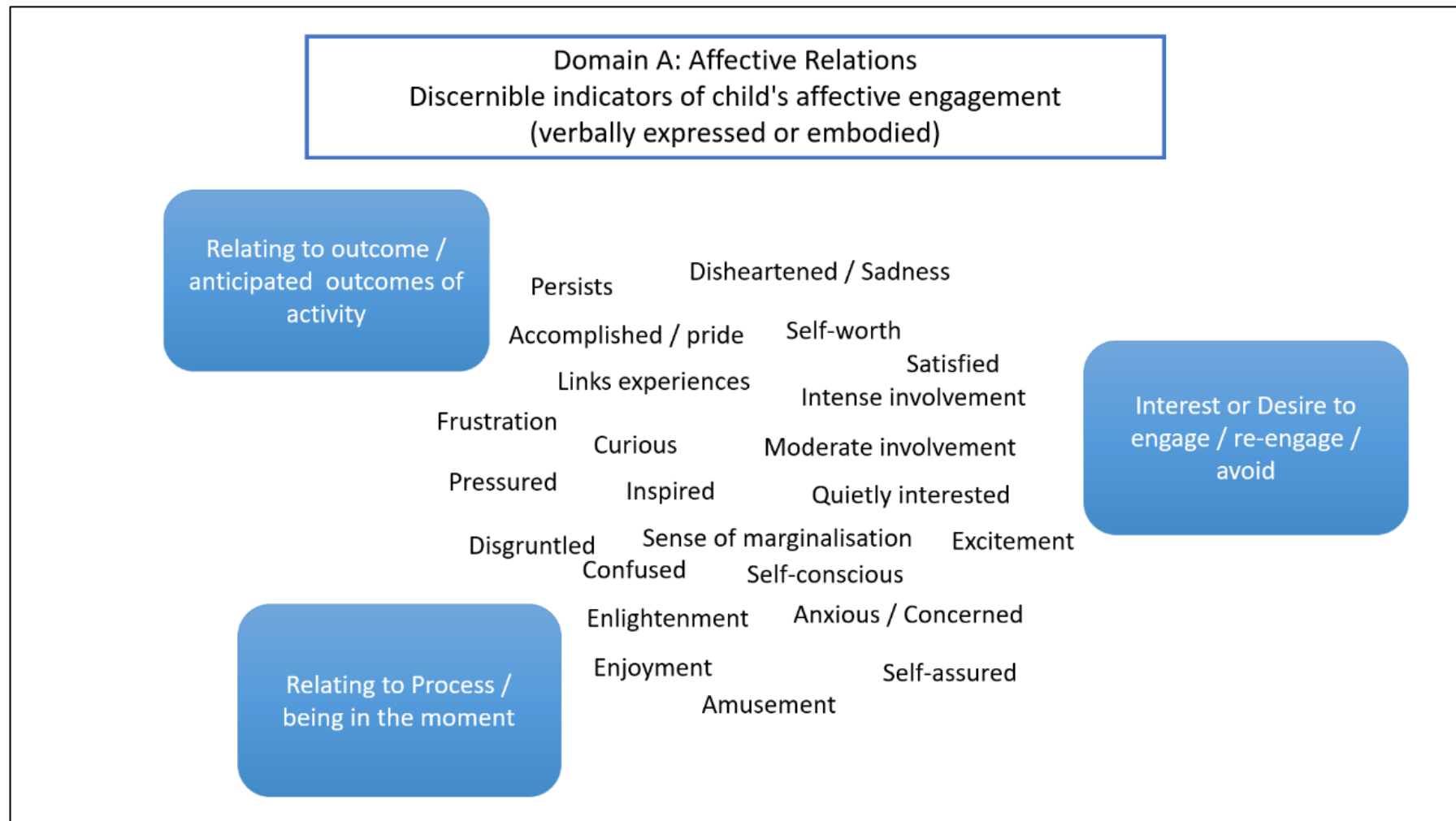
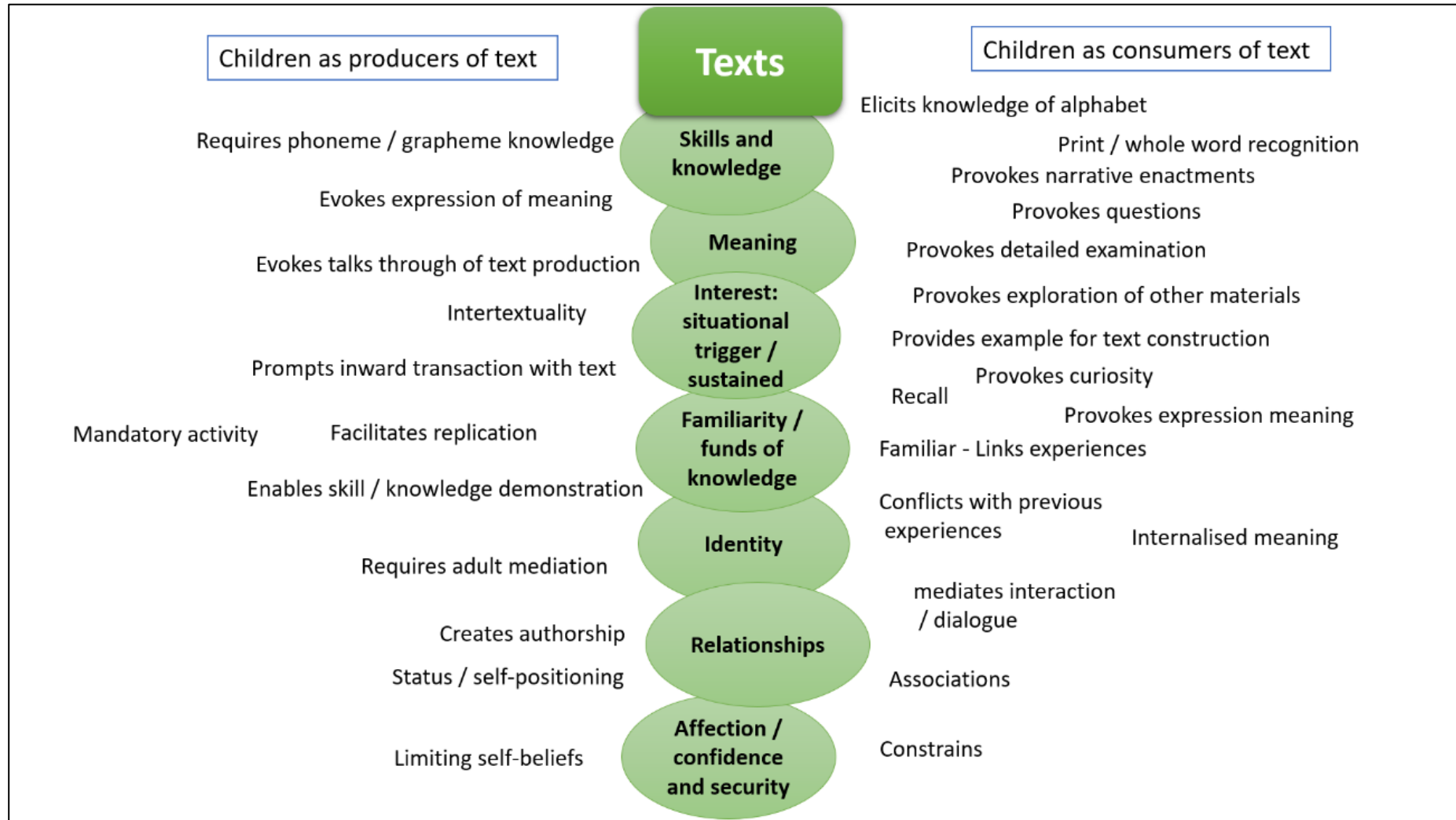


FIGURE 5: CODE TO CATEGORY MAP - DOMAIN A: AFFECTIVE RELATIONS



As categories began to take shape, it became apparent that coding, underpinned by the research questions and theoretical framework had directed my analytic thinking toward the nature of children's social interactions in the activity setting; the 'literacy event' or the significance of the text in the relations in the activity setting seemed on the periphery of the code-to-categories maps. Consequently, I revisited Stage two, (generating codes and analytic memos), applying another layer of coding to each data excerpt which focused explicitly on how the text / materials were influencing relations in the activity setting (see 'codebook' in appendix K). Drawing on 'new materialist' theories, as discussed in chapter 2, the text and materials were viewed as 'actants' (Latour, 2005). Under the domain of 'intentions for participation' P3 codes were generated to explicate how the text or materials shaped relations in literacy events when children were both consumers, and / or producers of text. This generated an additional 26 codes, from which an additional code-to-category map was generated (figure 6). This ensured, when moving into phase four, that the literacy event was foregrounded in developing themes.

FIGURE 6: CODE TO CATEGORY MAP - DOMAIN P – STRAND P3: TEXTS AND MATERIALS



Stage four: Identifying and reviewing themes

Themes do not emerge from the data, as they do not pre-exist (Braun and Clarke, 2006); themes are sculpted as the analyst actively chooses how to shape the raw data through increasingly abstract analytic work: the challenge in qualitative research is to make the process transparent. The themes developed in this study were shaped by the cultural-historical frameworks and my own professional background. Themes were grounded in the research questions, meaning that, to some extent, themes reflected 'what was looked for', yet concurrently, they were securely rooted in data. It is through this entanglement of factors that the thematic findings were constructed.

The themes generated did not simply represent a discernible or recurrent feature in the data; as Braun and Clarke (2013) posit, each theme had a 'central organising concept' (p224). The authors explain that there must be an idea, often a complex, multi-dimensional one, giving structure to the theme. For example, 'relationships' were a significant feature of each domain of coding, but this notion, in isolation does not offer insight into children's experiences of literacy. Thus, human relationships are an aspect of, and connection between, each theme. A theme is construed as a conceptual understanding, rather than a concrete representation of the data (Saldaña, 2016), each theme is distinct, capturing something meaningful on its own, but they also interrelate, forming the overall story of the research.

The ethnographic and interpretative nature of the study meant that at every stage analysis had, to some extent, transcended the single activity setting captured in each data item (Hedegaard, 2008b), and involved some macro level analysis of societal and institutional practices. However, as potential themes were generated, supplementary data (interview data, children's perspectives activity data and documental data) were scrutinised systematically to validate and evidence, or problematise developing interpretations. The data overview documented during stage one was reviewed, to identify and selectively code additional observational data items which potentially contributed to developing themes.

Thematic maps were refined and reconfigured, capturing the evolving conceptual understandings of themes. Whilst stage two coding was guided by strands of research questions for each domain (i.e. child strand and environment strand), during stage four the analytic work brought the strands together, seeking to illuminate the child / environment interface, and develop themes grounded in analysis of the dynamic relations in the activity setting, represented in figure 7. An overarching theme was generated to explicate how analysis of data through the study's theoretical framework offers original insights into children's unique, personal literacy experiences and brings a new dimension to the field of

early childhood literacy. Concurrently analysis developed three interrelated themes offering insights to children's experiences of literacy across the domains of intentions, identities and affective relations, as represented in figure 8. Children's identities, for example began as a domain of inquiry, but was also found to be a key aspect of children's intentions with texts, and inseparable from their affective relations in the activity setting, and this developed into the theme of '*Self-experience, self-expression, and self-positioning through text*'.

FIGURE 7: DYNAMIC RELATIONS OF CHILD AND ENVIRONMENT IN LITERACY EVENTS

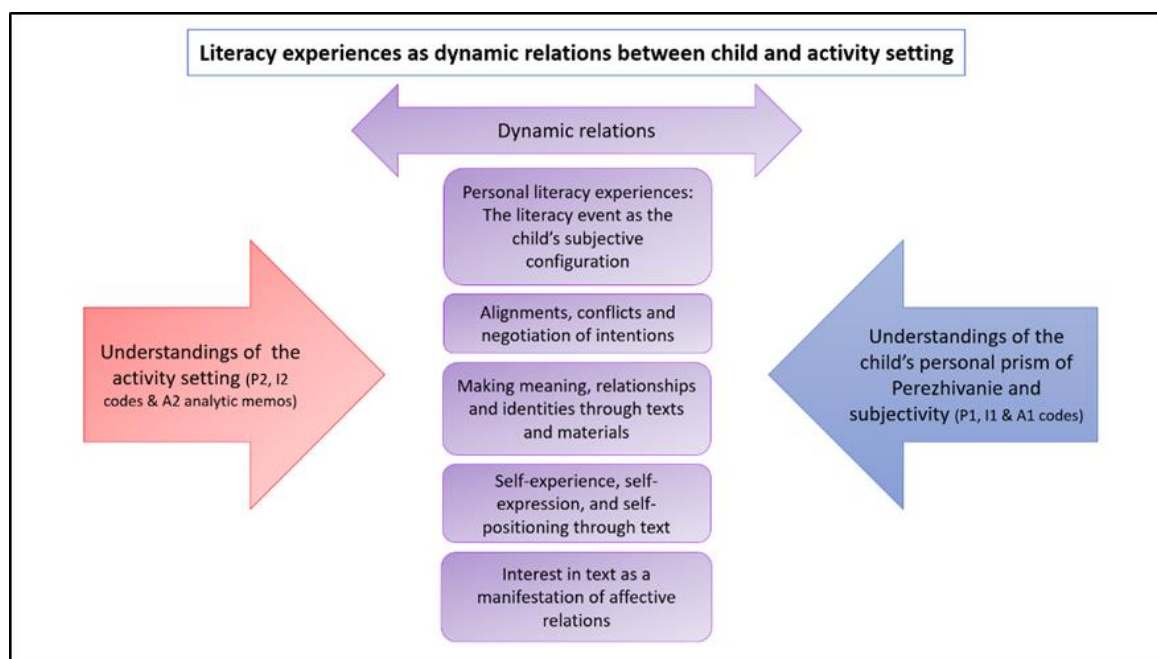
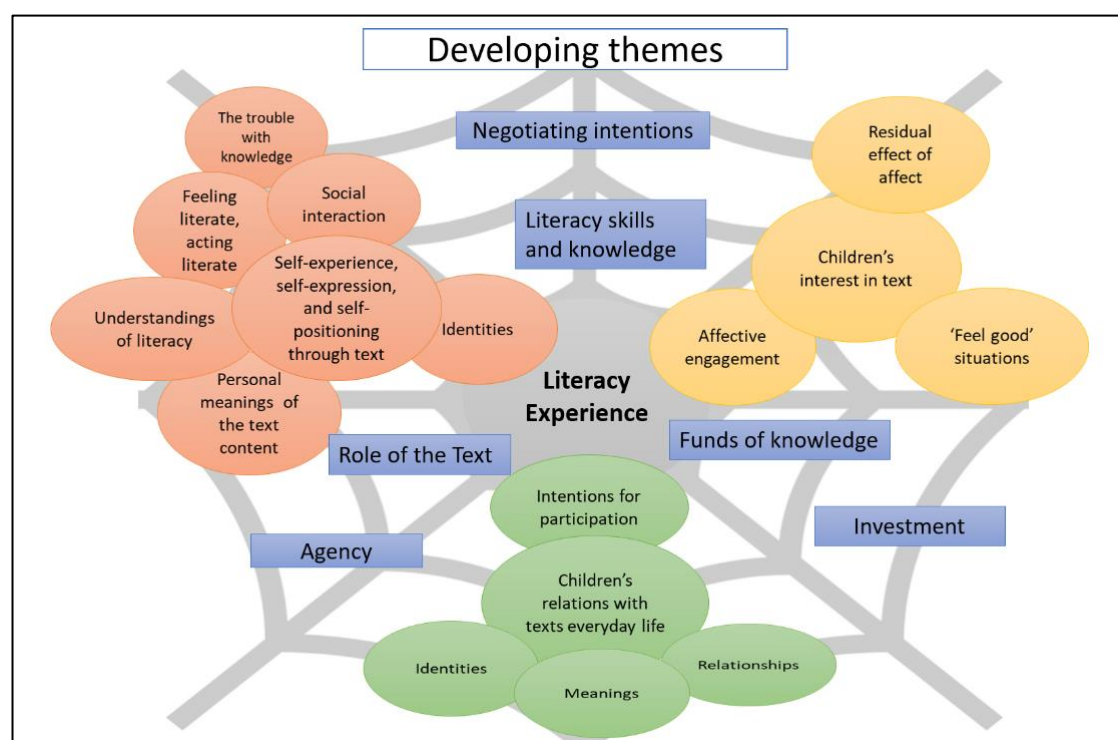


FIGURE 8: DEVELOPING INTERRELATING THEMES



Stage 5: Defining and developing themes

This stage again involved the structure of Braun and Clarke's (2006) model, conceptualised through Saldaña's (2016) model of thematic analysis. The four themes, as discussed below were developed, refined and defined in a recursive process, until the conceptual understandings could be articulated, and theoretical arguments constructed.

Themes are presented separately in the following sections of this thesis; however, each theme encompasses an aspect of the child's literacy experience, and although one aspect may be foregrounded or peripheral at any moment, each aspect is applicable to each and every literary experience.

Themes

- **Unique and personal experiences with texts:** this overarching theme encompasses how the conceptual lenses of activity settings, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity (with contributions from new materialist theories), offer understandings of young children's literacy experiences. The theme encapsulates the dynamic relation of child, social others, text / materials and context, unsettling the binary of individual and social. The theme explores harmony and discord in the activity setting, and seeks to elucidate the child's perspective, re-imagining the literacy event as a child's personal subjective configuration.
- **Making meaning, relationships and identities with text:** this theme addresses the question of children's intentions and renders visible how, through a wide range of texts, the participant children agentively made meaning, made relationships and made identities in their play and everyday lives.
- **Interest[s] in text:** through exposing the intensities of children's affective relations in literacy events, this theme explored children's situational curiosity, and their sustained and enduring interests in different texts and literacy activities.
- **Self-configurations, self-expression, and self-positioning through text:** This theme unpacks the domain of identity-making with text, exploring how children experienced themselves as being 'someone' in the literacy event, and how they express their experience of self and, in doing so positioned themselves in the relations.

Stage six: Reporting and presenting findings

As previously discussed, the research leaned towards an instrumental case study approach (Stake, 2005) to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena of young children's literacy

experiences rather than to understand a few single cases. However, the lenses of perezhivanie and subjectivity assert a theoretical proposition that children's literacy experiences will always be unique and individual. Thus, chapter 6 will present the children's 'stories', that is, narrative accounts of each individual child. Chapter 7, comprising thematically organised sections, will then present the study's thematic findings through data portraits, analytic commentaries and discussion.

Children's stories

The ethnographic methodology meant that I had developed a close relationship with each child and family; oftentimes, my analytic thinking developed not only in words, but through subjectively re-visioning and re-living my experiences of multiple activity settings, with a deep sense of the context and who each child was. The aim of the children's stories is to convey to the reader, through narrative accounts, who Anya, Ben, Amir, Fynn and Elijah are, their characters and personalities. I discuss how children's characters and personal circumstances shaped their literacy experiences. These accounts draw on observational data (data codes are shown in the narratives for transparency) and also draw heavily on parent and practitioner perspectives, children's views and my own ethnographer perspective documented in the supplementary data set. The children's stories offer a brief in-case account of the analytic themes however, these are fully developed in the subsequent sections.

Research findings and discussion

The study's findings, and discussions of findings are presented thematically. To reiterate, I conceptualised analysis of data as a process of generating meaning at increasingly higher levels of abstraction through the stages of generation of data, codes, categories and themes to construct theoretical propositions about young children's literacy experiences. Thus, to explicate this process, each theme is presented firstly through portraits of data, which combine still images from video data, transcription of verbal interaction and description of non-verbal activity. Secondly, an analytic commentary of each data portrait is offered. Thirdly, each theme is considered through theoretical discussions.

SELECTION OF DATA

In total 231 observational data items were gathered during the study and it is therefore impossible for the thesis to include representations of the entire data set; thus, 13 detailed data portraits are presented across four sections. It was important to acknowledge that in selecting data to represent in detail, I have acted as 'editor', making judgments about the

value of certain data over others (Denscombe, 2014). Therefore, the data items selected for inclusion in chapter 7, were chosen for the following reasons.

- The theme under discussion was particularly apparent in the data item, evident through code application, code clusters, analytic memos and thematic mapping.
- To give equal representation to all participant children.
- To present data from both the home and nursery contexts.
- To include a range of different types of literacy, involving different media.
- Two data portraits (E17/AM13 and AM5/F10) were selected because they represented two participant children, enabling analysis of children's distinct experiences of the same activity setting.

Data portraits presented are intended to be illustrative, not conclusive, they are offered in support of the arguments and theoretical propositions made, not as unequivocal proof (Denscombe, 2014).

RESEARCH VALIDITY

In terms of research validity, there is no simple comparison between case-study research and other research methodologies. This does not mean, however that the approach lacks rigour or validity. In qualitative inquiry Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that validity can be thought of as trustworthiness, established through; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed, I claim credibility in this thesis through the longitudinal design and persistent observation which alongside the supplementary data sets and verification with practitioners, enabled triangulation of data.

Whilst the case-study approach generates rich, detailed ideographic accounts, these are not replicable and cannot be generalised (Thomas, 2011). There is a need to value singularity in the study of human and social processes, which, arguably has been rejected in more traditional methods of social research where the aim has been to generalise (Madeira Coehlo, 2016). Thus, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) notion of transferability can be thought of as the extent to which qualitative research findings might be more widely applicable. The ethnographic methods used to generate data in this study afforded a 'close-up' view of five children's experiences with texts, but it is not the aim of the study to merely produce a collection of anecdotes (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Rather, the aim is to report findings deeply contextualised and situated in the everyday experiences of the five focal children, and through these, generate theoretical insights that are potentially applicable beyond the contexts studied (Rowe, 2013);

as Gonzales Rey and Mitjáns Martínez (2017) explain; “Empirical material is organised during the research process as meaningful constructions that are compatible with the theoretical model” (p.203). The study’s dependability and confirmability are defended firstly in the transparency of the methods through which data were generated, processed and analysed and through the auditability of the data corpus and data sets shown in the appendices.

Whilst in constructing the data portraits, I have endeavoured to ‘stay close’ to the raw data, analytic commentaries and theorisations of children’s experiences reported here are my own subjective configurations, offering a view through the ‘researcher’s eyes’, illuminating things that might not otherwise have come to the fore (Donmoyer, 2009). The reader is invited to view the phenomena of children’s literacy experiences from the researcher perspective; this does not mean these interpretations have to be accepted.

The study’s validity, or trustworthiness has been defended throughout chapters 4 and 5, to summarise;

- The study’s interpretative paradigm is clarified
- The theoretical lenses are explained
- The research process is carefully and transparently documented
- The approach to data analysis is explained
- The highly interpretive coding of children’s affective relations was peer reviewed
- Interpretations and theoretical propositions are explicitly grounded in data.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aim of chapter 5 has been to explain and justify how the analytic framework was constructed and systematically, but iteratively applied to the data. After considering the multiple different conceptualisations and models of thematic analysis and of ‘coding’ purported in the qualitative research methods literature, I argue that the bespoke framework constructed was appropriate to respond to this study’s overarching aim and to the specific research questions. In summary, the process facilitated credible constructions of meaning and understandings of the data at increasingly higher levels of abstraction. Salient issues have been drawn out and theoretical propositions generated that offer lenses to understand the complexity of the phenomena of young children’s literacy experiences.

The resultant ‘children’s stories’ are now reported in chapter 6 and the themes constructed around each domain of inquiry are presented in chapter 7.

CHAPTER 6: CHILDREN'S STORIES

This chapter presents the children's stories, idiographic accounts of the individual participant children. The stories are intentionally written in an informal style, aiming to give the reader a sense of who the children were, offering a glimpse into their characters, everyday lives and activities. The stories are constructed from insights from across the data corpus, incorporating multiple perspectives, drawing heavily on data from parents' interviews (PIT), key person interviews (KPIT), the children's nursery 'Learning Journal' files (LJF) (which comprise practitioner observations of children's activity in nursery, that they deem worthy of noting) and from data generated through the different children's perspective activities, that is puppet mediated interviews (PMI), video stimulated dialogue (VSD), photo mediation (PH) and object mediated dialogue (OMD), in addition to my ethnographic knowledge. The stories offer the reader an overview of the participant children, providing context to the data portraits presented in the following chapter.

AMIR'S STORY

Amir was 3:7 years-old when data gathering began. He lived with both parents and two older sisters Zainab (6) and Akeelah (9) about a quarter mile from nursery. Both Zainab and Akeelah had previously attended the setting, and I had an established relationship with the family. Amir attended nursery each morning and was in Nikita's key group.

Amir's parents were of Pakistani heritage and the family mainly spoke Urdu at home. His mother, Asma, was a full-time parent and his father, Asif, worked in a local factory from Monday to Thursday, and as a porter at the local hospital on Saturdays and Sundays. Asma was very active in the local Islamic community, frequently acting as interpreter for other families when required, and she attended many of the family learning activities on offer at the nursery's children's centre and at the local library. This meant that Amir was quite familiar with the nursery environment, and many of the staff when he started in September.

On the one hand, Amir seemed very excited at the prospect of starting nursery; on his first morning, he arrived smartly dressed, and Asma explained that he had insisted on wearing his best shirt and bow tie for the occasion. Yet during the first weeks he seemed a little apprehensive, he tended to 'check' with adults before selecting resources or engaging in activity, possibly confirming that he was 'allowed' and that he was doing the 'right thing'. For

example, video data (AM 9) show's Amir waiting in the periphery of an evolving 'story-play' event until Nikita noticed him and explicitly invited him to join.

I interviewed Asma a month after Amir began nursery; she explained how Amir 'noticed' things, saying he '*always listens very carefully*' and that he was intensely interested in the world and how things work, she said;

1.33: *His brain is totally mechanically, he like looking at leaflets of machines, and he asks, Mummy, can I have this one, and last time, when a man came to my home to fix a new bathroom, he was looking at the man's things saying 'Mummy, can I have this one'. All the time he was looking at him and telling me, 'he's doing this, he's doing this one'.* (AM PIT [transcribed verbatim]).

Amir's 'noticing' was also evident in data of the 'object mediated dialogue' activity (AM OMD), in which he commented on all but one of the artefacts in the bag. For example, he explained that the 'till receipt' was '*from the shopping*' and that the library card was '*to borrow books*', suggesting that these cultural artefacts signified cultural practices with which Amir was familiar and had 'noticed'. With this cultural knowledge, Amir frequently engaged in, what I considered, 'mature' conversations with practitioners.

However, still developing the pronunciation of some speech sounds, his detailed explanations were sometimes difficult to follow. Asma spontaneously commented on Amir's language development during the interview, saying;

3.39: *He had a problem with speaking, when he turned three years, he wasn't speaking much, and we had appointments with the speech therapy and now he's totally opposite, he's changed, he's totally using English speaking, and understanding Urdu when I say something in my language* (AM PI [transcribed verbatim]).

Data indicated that Amir experienced a wide range of literacy practices in his home and community settings. For example, during two home visits, his eldest sister, Akeelah brought out a well-used notebook of her poetry (AM36), and proudly shared some of her poems published on the school website (AM41). Asma explained that she and the children visited the library weekly and she elaborated about her own studies, saying;

10.50: *He sees me do the homework, I'm going to the college for a book-keeping course and there's work, sometimes I use the calculator and he asks me, can I put down the numbers* (AM PIT).

But, whilst Amir experienced multiple literacy practices at home, data also indicated that the family held, and valued more traditional views of literacy. For example, commenting on Amir's early writing Asma said:

10.17: *He takes his pen and say 'I'm writing a letter mummy', and I ask, 'who to', and he say, 'it's for you mummy'. But it's not writing, it's just scribbling, just pretending.* (AM PIT).

14.59 - *He like story books, but he says, 'Mummy I want to read it', so I say, okay you read it. But he's looking at the pictures making story up [.....] So, I say, this is not reading story, no, you have to look at this one (referring to print) He's just talking about pictures.* (AM PIT).

Amir expressed a corresponding view during the puppet interview (AM PMI), he explained that the pictures were 'to look at' and the print was 'for reading', but he explained that he could not read yet. On a similar note, data (AM 41) showed Zainab encouraging Amir to trace some letters, she praised his efforts saying; *'Well done, that's exactly how your writing should look in Reception (class)'* (AM41, 16.55).

Entries of practitioner observations into Amir's 'Learning Journal' file at nursery recorded his independent use of the Smart Board, his abundant 'box modelling' activity and text creation, however, notably absent was any observation of Amir's volitional activity with books, comics or other texts. During our final interview, Nikita spoke about how Amir was interested in rhyme and alliteration, but when I asked about interest in books she said; *"no, actually, no, I've not really seen him with books, but he'll sit and listen to stories in the group, and he's got really good recall"* (AM KPIT. 2.10). Yet, Amir's data set included nine episodes of volitional book activity, five of which were recorded at the nursery, distributed across six months, suggesting his book activity was present at nursery, but not noticed.

ANYA'S STORY

Anya was the oldest child in her class, having turned 4-years-old the day before she began nursery. Her mother described her as 'very confident' and a 'real bossy boots' (A PIT 0.52) and having previously been a frequent visitor at nursery with her childminder, Anya was expected to settle in well. To everyone surprise however, she became tearful each morning, needing the support of an adult to separate from her mother. On many mornings, I was that adult, and quickly became a trusted person with whom Anya could retreat to the relative calm of the book corner, until she felt ready to venture into the busyness of the nursery classroom. The tearfulness was always transient, and during these times, Anya and I enjoyed a good chat over a familiar book; we became well acquainted during those first few weeks.

Anya was fluently bilingual, without even a hint of an accent when she spoke in English. She could also translate between Polish and English effortlessly, which made her a particularly valuable friend to another Polish speaking child with very limited English; furthermore, a Polish teaching assistant occasionally consulted Anya when she could not recall an English word. Anya recognised the empowering position her bilingualism offered, and during my visits to her home, she took on the role of my teacher. Pointing to pictures or objects, she slowly said the Polish word for me to repeat, then corrected my poor pronunciation (A 51).

Anya's parents, Marta and David had moved to the town from Poland more than a decade earlier; both were university graduates, but although they spoke English perfectly, had been unable to find work in their degree fields. David worked as a delivery driver for a national courier company and Marta worked three days a week as a clerk at the local Catholic church. Their 9-year-old son, Jan, had previously attended the nursery; he was particularly remembered by staff as, at aged 4 he, *'could read already'* and *'had exceptional knowledge about the world'* (A FNC) although no one could recall more precisely the sorts of texts he read.

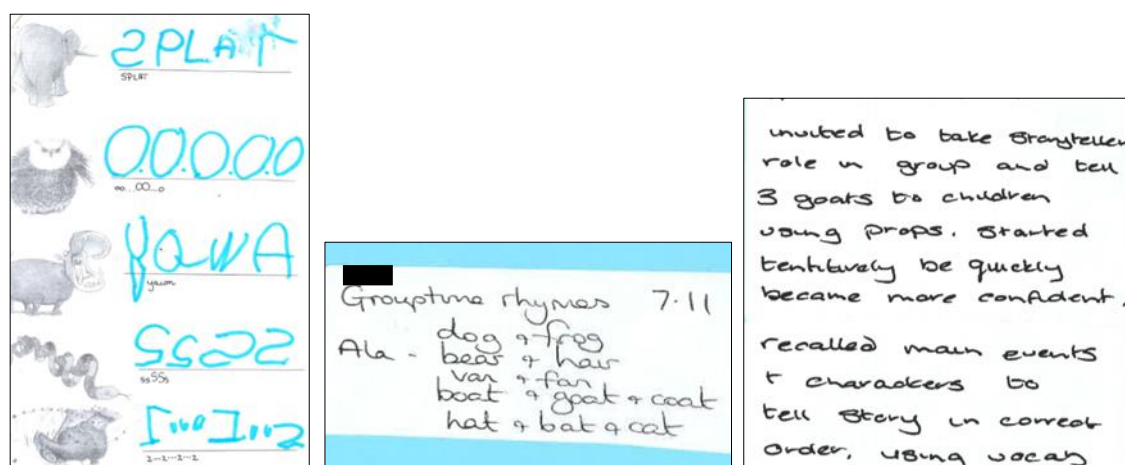
During the parent interview, Marta spoke of her children having very different learning styles, in comparison to Jan's technical knowledge, she spoke of Anya's imagination;

"So, I can see she's very imaginative there, I think, on the side of learning, maths and English, you know, she's getting there, but I would say she's average there" (A PIT: 4.47)

"He [Jan] knew the solar system at that point" (A-PIT: 6.25) So we had to challenge him even more and more and more, otherwise he wasn't, you know. With [Anya] we don't want to push too much, because, I can see she's more interested in drawing rather than learning that way" (A PIT: 6.40).

Anya attended nursery for three morning sessions and two full day sessions each week. Her key person was Mariana, a young practitioner in her first year of practice. Nursery staff generally thought of Anya as 'very able'; her nursery 'Learning Journal' file contained ninety-one short observations, anecdotes, photos and examples documenting moments that practitioners had deemed worthy of recording. Even during the first few 'wobbly' weeks, recurrent terminology through the file included, 'able to', 'confidently', 'engaged', 'listening' and 'completed', terms which seemed to sum up who Anya was recognised as being in the setting (A-LJF). Entries spoke of her character and wide-ranging skills and activities, including twenty-one broadly literacy related entries which noted her engagement with picturebooks and examples of her handwriting, with three comments about identifying rhyme and initial sounds. For example;

Figure 9: Examples of entries to Anya's Learning Journal File (A LJF)



Mariana spoke very positively of Anya's literacy development during our final interview, saying:

"Her skills are really good. She recognises all, well most letters, she shows that during her play, she names letters, and when we were doing initial sounds activities she just got it very very quickly, and in those phonics activities when I ask, 'what else begins with...' she was able to give me many examples, it just comes from her, no clues, she thought of them, she can hear it" (A KPIT - 0.17)

I was a little surprised that where the learning journal had suggested a broad view of literacy development, these final comments mirrored the assessment statements. When prompted to discuss Anya's reading preferences and text making, Mariana elaborated, again very positively. Giving an example of when Anya had written her own version of a familiar storybook she said;

"I think she copied some of the words, but she knows what would happen next, so before she turned the page, she said what would happen, and then she turned the page and made it on her paper" (A KPIT – 3.17) *"she took it home already, so I can't show you but it was really good"* (A KPIT– 3.32)

Anya's perception of herself as a reader and writer varied widely depending on the context. During one of our 'escape to the book corner' episodes, I commented on how well she had read the familiar book 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' saying:

"wow that was fabulous, how did you get so great at reading?"

"That's just how I do it" she replied confidently with a huge grin and pointing to herself with both index fingers (A 15).

Yet on another occasion, (A FNC 21/2) when heading to a group story session which seemed to be worrying her, she found me to say that it was her turn to be the group storyteller that day. Not yet sensing her concern I said, *"wonderful, I'm looking forward to that"*, to which she responded, *"but Lucy, I can't even read yet"*.

Similarly, during two of the children's interview activities, Anya explicitly stated that she was a non-reader. During the puppet activity in September (A PMI) she explained that her parents and brother could read, but that she could not. She reiterated this position during the photo mediation activity (A PH), again she stated that she could not read, and despite my recall of examples to persuade her otherwise, she said she could only read those books because *"someone told me"*.

My own fieldnotes and fieldwork experiences revealed yet another side of Anya. In nursery, Anya appeared to me as an 'adult pleaser', an *'in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time'*, sort of a child. That's not to say she was passive, she was usually keen to contribute to group discussions, or approach an adult to share her ideas, make requests or join in an activity. These behaviours oftentimes served to consolidate her identity of the 'model nursery child', demonstrating skills and knowledge she perceived as valued. Play with her peers seemed to be collaborative, with many examples of negotiation and joint planning of play activities. The 'bossy boots' her mother spoke of remained largely invisible, until that is, my visits to her home, when Anya became the boss. During three of my four visits, only Anya and Marta were home, and realising she was the centre of attention, Anya decided what we would all do. She took her role as my Polish teacher very seriously and when, for example, she got out a colouring book, she gave clear instructions for which part I was to colour, and which colour I should use (A 50); she did however, seem somewhat surprised at my compliance.

BEN'S STORY

Ben was 3:9 years-old when the study began. He lived with his parents and siblings about half a mile from the nursery. Ben had two older brothers, Nathan (7) and Jake (5) and a younger sister, Alicia (2). The family's fifth child was born during the fieldwork phase. Ben's parents were in their mid-twenties, his mother, Natalie, had a large extended family living in the area who provided a supportive network for the whole family. Ben's father, Simon was originally from the town, but had spent prolonged periods of his childhood with different foster carers

across the county. After a period of unemployment, Simon began work in a local factory shortly before fieldwork began; Natalie was a full-time mother. Ben's brothers had both previously attended the nursery, and Alicia attended in the two-year-old's room, thus Natalie and Simon were familiar with the nursery, and they and I had an established relationship.

Ben was the only focal child who had previously attended the setting, as his family were eligible for government funding for nursery provision for two-year-olds. Although, this did not make his transition to the main classroom straight forward; the change of group and Key Person after the summer break, which coincided with his father's return to work, unsettled Ben (B-LJ; B-FNC). Ben joined Nikita's key group; within a few weeks he appeared more comfortable, he quickly rekindled a close friendship with two other boys, and spent time with his cousin, also in the same group.

During our initial interview Natalie described Ben's character as 'changeable', explaining that sometimes he liked to watch 'You Tube' clips, and would be '*really chilled*', yet other times he was '*totally hyper*' (B-PIT). She explained that at home, Ben liked to play Xbox video games, but as the boys found it difficult to share, there were often conflicts. They had bought them each a tablet to resolve the issue, but they still preferred Xbox. At nursery, Ben showed an interest in motorbikes (B23; B24; B29), which Natalie's comments elucidated. She explained that her father, an ex-motorcycle racer, occasionally took Ben and his brothers to motorbike races, where they could go to the 'enclosure', meet the riders, and see the motorbikes. Simon also had a motorbike that he was 'doing up'. Thus, motorbikes were highly valued and frequently discussed in Ben's family (B PIT).

During the interview, I asked Natalie if Ben liked comics or story books, she said he just wasn't interested in that sort of thing, then she added;

6.31: *When we go to my sister's, she's got them out on this bookcase for {Emily} and then he'll happily sit and get a book out, yeah, I think at home, where he's got the Xbox or the tablet, he'd just rather do them.* (B-PIT)

In the final interview (B KPIT), Nikita described Ben as disliking adult attention and praise, as he became self-conscious; although she added, that indirect, subtle praise sometimes enhanced Ben's willingness to take part in group activities. Nikita's comments are exemplified in data showing a practitioner-led group writing activity (B 20), in which children were required to copy certain letters of the alphabet onto their own white boards. At first, Ben complied by making a mark, then quickly rubbing it off before Nikita could see. Yet, as the activity progressed and Nikita subtly acknowledged his attempts, he began holding up his white board, showing her his writing.

When I asked Nikita how she would describe his literacy development to a reception class teachers she said;

9.43: *Well, he likes a good story, he's focused, and when we're looking at a book, he points out stuff he likes but, no, you don't see him in the book corner, he's not one you would see writing, and well, I can barely encourage him to write his name.* (B-KPIT)

Accordingly, only five brief entries into his Learning Journal file (B-LJ) commented on volitional literacy-based activity, two documented activity with books, two recorded 'text-making' and one commented on using the smartboard. However, Ben's social activity was extensively documented, terminology such as 'happy to take turns', 'worked together', 'sharing', for example, were recurrent. Correspondingly, in reviewing Ben's data set, it is notable that of the 42 observational data items, only two involved solitary activity. Peer relationships seemed important to Ben, and he would frequently leave activities in which he seemed deeply engaged, to pursue and maintain friendships.

Ben participated in three of the children's perspective activities and in both, did so with friends, and tended to follow their lead in the dialogue. Although, during the photo mediation activity, he selected an image of himself with a picturebook, describing his activity, quite casually as, '*I'm just reading a book*' (B PH).

ELIJAH'S STORY

With an end of August birthday, Elijah had just turned 3-years-old when he started nursery. He settled in well and explored the nursery environment with an abundance of enthusiasm (E-LJ; E-FNC). Elijah navigated quite a complex daily routine, after taking his sister to school, he was brought to nursery each morning by his mother, Julie. Each afternoon he was collected by his childminder, with whom he stayed until his father, Daniel collected him in the evening. Both parents were scientists, and both had quite long commutes to work, but with some flexibility were able to organise their work lives around these childcare arrangements. Elijah's key person was Kate, the class teacher.

Elijah appeared to manage the routine and transitions well; during our initial interview (E-PIT), Julie described his character:

0.38: *He definitely doesn't strop for as long as his sister. We haven't had as much stubbornness from him [...] he's quite happy and open to new things. But he has to kind-of get the lay of the land first before he then opens up [...] But once he's up and running he's gone,*

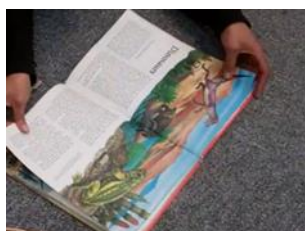
he's happy, he's sociable, he loves people. He loves toys, he loves everything really, he's very happy.

Elijah's sister, 5-year-old Matilda had previously attended nursery, and as a member of my key group, I remembered her fondly as a little girl who engaged in very mature conversations, and who had an interest in science. Field notes made during my first field-work home visit suggested this continued to be the case; Julie spoke of a recent family visit to a science fair, while Matilda showed me, and explained the bead model of 'DNA' she had made there. (E FNC)

Julie also spoke of how Matilda liked to 'mother' Elijah and take care of him:

She can take over, or she can speak for him, so that's the thing we're trying to get her to stop. We're asking him what he wants, and she'll go 'oh he said he wants this' and we're 'no, no, he didn't, let him answer the question' (E-PIT 2.05).

Elijah had an ongoing interest in, and extensive knowledge of dinosaurs, which transcended almost every aspect of his daily life. He had dinosaur themed clothing, shoes, backpack and lunch box, and he carried model dinosaurs with him between home, nursery and his childminder's house as his 'transitional objects'. During his first weeks at nursery, Kate noticed his interest and responded by seeking out a rather old, tatty dinosaur textbook, which became a recurrent feature in the data, as Elijah frequently re-engaged with the book throughout the 7 months of fieldwork.

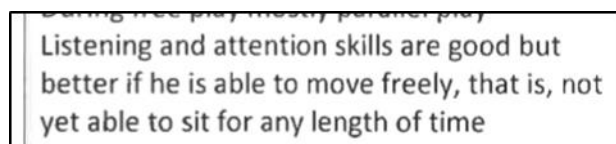


Elijah could name an impressive range of dinosaurs and would often expand with some interesting facts in his conversations with adults (less so with his peers). However, oftentimes the dialogue did not flow seamlessly as Elijah's still immature pronunciation made the detailed content of his speech difficult to comprehend.

The resulting misunderstandings occasionally led to frustration for Elijah.

Throughout the fieldwork I observed many warm and affectionate interactions between Elijah and Kate. However, particularly during the first term, Elijah found it challenging to conform to the rules and conventions of group activities, mainly in that he found it very difficult to wait when he wished to contribute, and he struggled to sit still in one place, as noted in an entry to his learning journal summarising his first half term at nursery.

FIGURE 10: EXAMPLE ENTRY INTO ELIJAH'S LEARNING JOURNAL (E LJ)

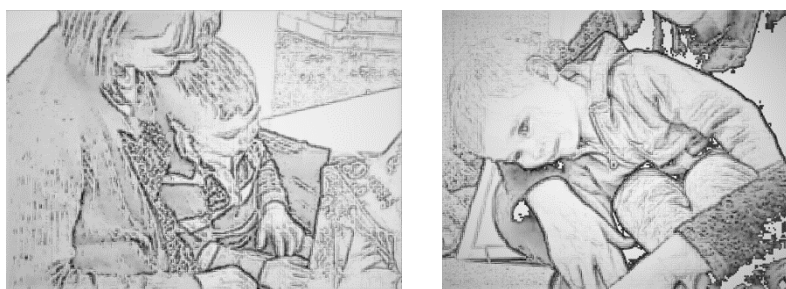


This meant that, during group activities, Elijah's name was frequently called as Kate gave gentle reminders to 'sit in his space' and 'wait for his turn'. His constant movement, however was not indicative of lack of attention, especially during group story-times; 12 video data items (E 1 to E12) captured Elijah's participation during these sessions, in which, typically his gaze was directed toward the book and storyteller and he eagerly 'joined in' and responded to questions. During our final interview, Kate also spoke of his levels of engagement in storybooks, she commented:

For most things [subject of book], particularly anything fact related, he's right in there and he's got really good recall, he only has to hear something once and he'll be able to tell you about it, he has that fascination and he does definitely go off and put that into his own play as well. (E-KPIT 2:02)

As he grew tired in the afternoons, Elijah often took a familiar book to an adult to read to him. As in the group sessions, he usually engaged actively with the text, however he also sought close physical contact; arguably, 'cuddles' were as important to him as the book.

FIGURE 11: VIDEO STILL IMAGES FROM DATA ITEMS E15 AND E17



Elijah participated in the children's perspective activities with an abundance of enthusiasm, although his comments were limited to pointing to and naming familiar people and objects.

When asked about Elijah's confidence in his own writing ability, Kate explained that when text-making was spontaneous in his play, he seemed very confident, but if asked by an adult to do something that he found challenging, he would '*just down tools and walk away*' (E- KPIT 6.51).

Through the fieldwork, I developed a view of Elijah as a very persistent little boy, determined to fulfil his own intentions in an activity, which occasionally led to confrontation with adults and his peers. Doing things 'his way' appeared important. For example, during January four data items (E26; E27; E28; E29) recorded Elijah enlisting practitioners to scribe lists of names of

his family and friends. He resisted all practitioner attempts to coax him to attempt to write himself. Similarly, during my first home visit, Elijah spent 45 minutes watching You Tube videos on his mother's phone, despite Julie's many attempts to remove it (E 48). Whilst, for some participant children, compliance with nursery routines and rules seemed to reinforce an identity position, Elijah, in contrast, seemed to value agency, and although he rarely refused to comply, he frequently negotiated the terms of his compliance.

FYNN'S STORY

Fynn was 3:6-years-old; he began attending nursery each morning but changed to afternoon sessions in February. Whilst the change involved getting to know a new group of children, Nikita remained his key person throughout. Fynn's parents had recently separated, and Fynn, his twin brothers (aged 19 months), and his mother, Danielle, had just moved to the area from a town about 10 miles away. Following the separation, Fynn's father had joined the army and visited fortnightly at weekends, although Danielle reported that arrangement to be inconsistent. Prior to moving to the area, Fynn had attended a community preschool where he had reportedly been happy and settled. Between January and March, Fynn was frequently absent from nursery due to recurrent illness, and often during this time, he was noticeably tired.

Early in our interview, Danielle spontaneously spoke of Fynn's 'emotional' character, she said;

0.51: He does like to play on his own sometimes, and when he's doing that, he finds it very upsetting if someone messes his game up.

1.27: If he's overly tired, the smallest thing can cause him to have a complete meltdown, and he does get quite emotional about things, yeah, he's quite a sensitive soul as well. (F PIT)

In contrast, my observations, alongside early entries into his Learning Journal described how Fynn settled into the nursery setting well, happy to explore the environment and eager to make friends. He often sought the company of children, usually boys, with whom he could engage in Spiderman, or other 'superhero' play. Making use of the nursery's outdoor space, this play was usually very physical, involving jumping off and over obstacles with 'Spiderman' type actions. The 'meltdowns' his mother referred to were not evident at nursery, although I experienced several occasions where Fynn was non-compliant with the nursery routine, as also noted in the entry to his Learning Journal below, summarising his first half term.

FIGURE 12: SUMMARY ENTRY INTO FYNN'S LEARNING JOURNAL (F LJF)

Name	Observations	Action
[REDACTED]	<p>Autumn 1</p> <p>[REDACTED] has settled into nursery well and has picked up the routine. He separates from mum happily and joins the group. He explores the classroom independently and will choose where to play. He is very sociable and will often invite others into his play often engaging in pretend play. He has a little stubborn side and sometimes a little more encouragement is needed for him to take part or to do as an adult has asked, this is short lived though and distraction often works. He enjoys a story and will engage in group activities if it interests him.</p> <p>Autumn 2</p>	<p>Encourage mark making and recognising his name</p> <p>Consistent approach to unwanted behaviour</p> <p>Maintain focus during group times [REDACTED]</p>

Like Ben, Fynn seemed drawn to social play, multiple entries into his learning journal noted how he confidently approached other children asking them to 'be his best friend' or to join his play, and reviewing Fynn's data set revealed that of the 41 observational data items, only 3 (F28; F22b; F15e) involved solitary activity.

Danielle spoke at length about their extensive book collection at home, describing how Fynn liked to use the pictures to make up his own elaborate version of stories. Her comments suggested that 'books' were a shared and social activity in their household, involving play and dialogue. For example, she said;

3.11: *But when we read stories, [Fynn] and I, he likes books that have got things in them that he can like 'take'. For example, one of his favourite books is the 'black and white club'. [...] And in it, well they have a cup cake and he's like 'umm, I'm choosing that cake' and he'll pick which cake he fancies. And then there'll be drinks of lemonade and he'll pick one and he'll say, 'which one do you want mum?'* (F PIT).

On day two of attending the afternoon sessions, Fynn brought one of his own books into nursery explaining to Nikita that he wanted to show the children (F 9). The Disney 'Toy Story' book included images from the popular movie, and with Nikita's encouragement, Fynn held the pages open for the group to see as he gave a synopsis of the narrative. The familiar images held the attention of the children, whilst enabling Fynn to socially position himself within the new peer group.

Similarly, a week later, Fynn participated in a 'helicopter stories' session. The class teacher had earlier scribed Fynn's story about Spiderman, the data item (F 37) recorded Fynn then enacting the story for the other children on the makeshift 'stage'. He took the part of Spiderman himself, and selected peers to enact other characters, as he enthusiastically enacted swinging from his web. Hence, his knowledge of popular culture served as a useful tool to agentively

construct an identity position as he found his space amongst an established friendship / peer group.

During the photo mediation activity, when I asked Fynn about his activity with books, he commented that, *'I can have books cos I'm a big boy'* (F PH 3.51). While on the one hand, this comment potentially indicated that he perceived himself as an emerging reader, equally, it may have link to one of his mother's comments (F PIT) about how she kept Fynn's books separate at home, as the twins tended to rip them. Fynn was intrigued by the images of himself, he selected five images, picking them up for closer examination, but did not respond to my comments.

Fynn's volitional text-making activity was evident across the data set, creating paper-based texts and writing on his 'junk models' (constructions of reclaimed boxes, bottle tops etc.) During our final interview, when Nikita was asked to summarise Fynn's literacy development, her comments focused on how Fynn had recently become interested in 'writing' stories, she said;

4.55 His story was amazing, he did this scary monster which had six heads, and on the next page, he was in the cage, and then it was an alien that eats people.

5.18 He really wants to write, and you can see him looking and really trying to copy, and he can be hard on himself if he doesn't think he's got it right. But if he's got an idea, and then there's something he can copy then he will (F KPIT).

Nikita went on to say that Fynn frequently took his text creations to show her, giving detailed explanations of his drawing and attempts at writing.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The children's stories highlight how the children were perceived and described very differently by different people, and how, children themselves constructed quite different perceptions of themselves in different contexts. These narrative accounts offer just a glimpse into each child's family situation and character, and some insight into their literacy practices at home and nursery, through a 'wide-angled' lens.

The following sections 'zoom-in' to the detail of children's activity in literacy events through presenting data portraits, analytic commentary and discussion of each thematic finding.

CHAPTER 7: THEMATIC FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter is thematically organised in five parts; each part brings together analysis from across the data sets, to take the reader through data portraits, analytic commentaries of data, and into a discussion of each theme. Data portraits combine video still images, transcription and description of individual video data items⁶, aiming partly, as Cohen et al. (2011) suggest, to 'let the data speak for themselves', inviting the reader to engage with the data through the portraits. Subsequently, I guide the reader through my analytic thinking, demonstrating how my interpretations have led to the re-conceptualisations, and theoretical propositions offered in relation to the four themes.

Part 1 is an exploration of the focal children's unique and personal experiences with texts. This section details the conceptual space generated, offering a lens to frame children's literacy experiences, illuminating, albeit partially, the child's perspective, and proposing a re-visioning of the literacy event as a personal, subjective configuration. Part 2 addresses the specific research question of children's intentions in literacy events, proposing that through the multitude of texts children encounter in their everyday lives, they agentively make meaning, relationships and identities. Part 3 reconceptualises the notion of children's interest[s] in literacy; a theme generated through analysing the affective relations in literacy events. Part 4 responds to the question of children's identities, exploring how children experienced themselves as 'someone' in a literacy event through their self-configurations, self-expression and self-positioning. The chapter summary concludes the chapter by juxtaposing the theoretical propositions made regarding children's intentions, identities and interest[s] in literacy, exploring how collectively these conceptualisations encapsulate the phenomena of children's literacy experiences.

⁶ Data codes attached to each data portrait relate to the data sets catalogued in appendix I.

PART 1 - UNIQUE AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH TEXTS

This overarching theme explores how the concepts of ‘activity settings’ (Hedegaard 2012a; 2014), ‘perezhivanie’ (Vygotsky, 1994) and ‘subjectivity’ (Gonzales Rey, 2012; 2017), with the contribution of ‘post humanist’ perspectives (Latour, 2005) generated a conceptual space to view the dynamic relations between child and environment, and how, in these relations, children’s experiences with texts are subjectively configured.

This section begins with the first of the data portraits, entitled ‘*Dinosaur Match*’ (E17 / AM13), which was selected for this section as the activity setting involved two of the focal children engaged in sustained volitional activity in the free-flow play session at the nursery setting. Thus, it exemplifies how one concrete activity setting was both a shared and co-constructed literacy event, whilst simultaneously, being a distinct and unique experience for each child. The analytic commentary that ensues draws attention to the distinct motive orientations of each child and the practitioner, Nikita, and how these shape, and were shaped by dynamic relations in the activity setting.

The discussion then explores how the study’s theoretical framework offers a fresh view of children’s participation in literacy events, debates how moments of harmony and discord of participants’ intentions offer potential for development, and finally proposes a conceptualisation of children’s ‘literacy experiences’. Whilst exemplifying the arguments made through reference to ‘*Dinosaur Match*’ (E17 / AM13), the theoretical propositions were constructed from analysis across the data corpus; the child’s distinct experience is also evident in a data portrait in part 3, ‘*Gorilla*’ (AM5 / F10) and moments of discord and harmony of intentions and the concept of the literacy experience are discernible across the 13 data portraits presented in this chapter, and across the observational data set; hence, the conceptualisation proposed of young children’s literacy experiences continues to develop and build across the chapter.

DINOSAUR MATCH - DATA ITEM E17 / AM13 – JANUARY
Amir and Elijah

Context

Prior to commencing video recording, Elijah approached Nikita, holding a familiar dinosaur textbook under one arm and carrying three model dinosaurs. He said, “*I need to find this one*”, trying to hold up one of the dinosaurs. Nikita understood, as she and Elijah had repeated this activity several times during the previous two weeks; he wanted to find the corresponding illustrations for each model dinosaur. Nikita responded, “*okay, come on then*”, taking the book from Elijah, they found a space in the area where the model dinosaurs (along with various animals, playmobile figures, props and books) were stored.

0.04



0.19



Elijah sits down on an upturned basket while Nikita makes herself comfortable on the floor and opens the book at the first page. Elijah tucks all but one of his models between the basket and Nikita, then looks back at them a second time, checking them.

0.00: NIKITA - *those are the proper labels for them* [points to the illustration and text]

Amir approaches, in a hurried manner, as if concerned he may be missing something.

0.06: NIKITA - *Is this him?* [to Elijah]

0.08: ELIJAH - *No*

0.14: NIKITA- *Is this him?* [turns page, rearranges position of book, and points to next illustration]

0.16: ELIJAH - *No* [with excitement]

Amir’s presence has not yet been acknowledged.

0.17: NIKITA - *He's got a horn on his head, hasn't he?* [pointing to model in E's hand. Turns page]

Amir begins to comment, but it goes unnoticed by Nikita, as she continues her conversation with Elijah

0.22: NIKITA - *Is this him?*

0.25: ELIJAH - *No* [stamping feet excitedly]

0.27



0.38



0.40



0.52



0.26: NIKITA - *What's this one?*

0.27: AMIR - *A stegosaurus*

0.28: NIKITA - [looks to Amir and nods] *A stegosaurus* [looks back at page]

0.30: AMIR - *A [??] stegosaurus*

0.30: NIKITA - *Is this him?* [pointing to illustration and looking at Elijah]

0.32: ELIJAH - *No* [excitedly, with tone suggesting it was obvious]

0.34: NIKITA - *What's this one?* [directing question to Elijah]

0.35: ELIJAH - *T Rex*

0.37: NIKITA - *A T-Rex* [looks at page] *What about this one?* [pointing to illustration]

0.39: AMIR - *A T-Rex-aurus*

0.40: NIKITA - [looks at Amir and laughs] *A T Rex-aurus!* [looks back at page]

0.43: NIKITA - *What about this one* [points to the print]

Nikita taps the print while phonetically sounding out, all-o-sau-rus, looking at Elijah, seeking confirmation that her pronunciation was correct. He doesn't respond, but closely examines his model.

0.46: NIKITA - *Maybe* [turns page and browses] *What about him?*

0.48: ELIJAH - *Umm uh, uh,*

0.48: AMIR - *A brontosaurus*

0.50: NIKITA - *He can swim* [said with a surprised tone] - *like a fish*

0.54: ELIJAH - *No a diplodocus* [excitedly, pointing to the illustration,]

0.55: NIKITA - *Is it?* [eye contact with Elijah, then turns back to illustration] *What's this with a long neck?*

1.02: AMIR - *A brontosaurus* [stretching up in demo]

Nikita turns her gaze briefly from Elijah to Amir

1.06: ELIJAH - *A brontosaurus* [with an authoritative tone]

1.09: NIKITA - *Look how long his tail is*

1.13: AMIR - [comments (inaudible) while pointing to illustration]

1.14: NIKITA - *It's super long isn't it? - do you think that's the baby?* [in response to Amir]

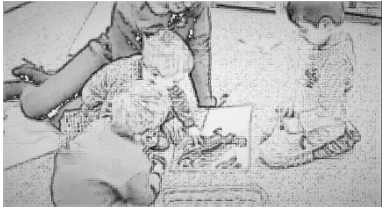
1.15



1.35



1.48



2.27



1.17: NIKITA – {*Elijah*} *what does he eat?*

1.20: ELIJAH - *Trees*

1.23: NIKITA - *Trees* [shrugging as if in agreement] *Shall we keep looking* [turns page] *Is that another brontosaurus*

1.28: AMIR – *Brachiosaurus* [stressed intonation]

1.31: NIKITA - *They have very tricky names don't they*, [looking at Amir] *Yes look* [points to the written text] *brachiosaurus* [sounding out phonetically while tracking the print with her index finger]

1.38: ELIJAH - *Look* [excitedly - placing his model on top of the illustration.]

1.41: AMIR - *A T Rex*

1.43: NIKITA - *Is it a T-Rex?*

1.45: ELIJAH - *No* [prolonged]

1.46: NIKITA - *You're right, it's not a T-Rex*

1.48: ELIJAH - *Look, there* [places his model on the page]

1.50: NIKITA - *It's the same as this one, that's right*

1.54: ELIJAH - *Found him* [excited, lifting his dinosaur up above his head]

Having found the corresponding dinosaur, both Elijah and Nikita cheer. Amir closely watches this interaction, then suddenly gets up, and leaves the area briefly, seeking a model dinosaur (2.01).

2.13: NIKITA - [continues to read print] *And sharp teeth like this one. a bit like a [??], does he eat other dinosaurs?*

2.18: ELIJAH - [holds up another model, then turns to the other models on the floor behind]

2.21: NIKITA - *Is this him?* [pointing to new illustration]

2.22: ELIJAH - [doesn't respond, attention fixed on his model that he manipulates on the floor,

2.23: NIKITA - *And this, is that the same?* [leaning over toward E to see his model]

Amir returns holding a model dinosaur.

2.24: AMIR - *This is the same as the one before* [pointing to the book and holding up his model dinosaur]

2.24: ELIJAH - [turns pages, searching for a particular illustration]

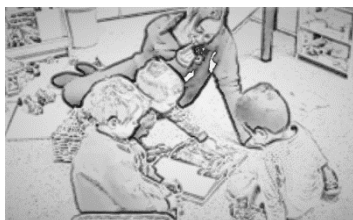
2.27: NIKITA - *Maybe* [looking briefly at A]

2.30: NIKITA - [turns gaze back to book] *Oh, what's he doing* [exaggerated tone]

2.34



2.41



3.10



Amir places his model on the page, Elijah, who is studying the page pushes it to one side. Nikita retrieves the model and hands it back to Amir whilst continuing her conversation with Elijah.

2.34: NIKITA - *What's he doing? why is he climbing that?*

2.36: ELIJAH - *Eat leaves* [points to page]

2.41: NIKITA - *You're right, he's going to try to eat the leaves* [looking at E, turns page]

2.46: NIKITA - *Is that a dinosaur?* [questioning tone, directed to Elijah]

2.49: ELIJAH - *No a fish*

2.51: NIKITA - *You're right, it is a fish* [turns page] *Is this him?*

2.56: AMIR - [excitedly] *Another stegosaurus*

2.59: ELIJAH - [points to illustration] *Eating*

3.01: NIKITA - *What was that?* [directed to Elijah]

3.02: ELIJAH - *Eating* [pointing to illustration]

3.04: NIKITA - *Eating - look at his long tongue* [gasps], *it curls*

3.10: AMIR - *This is a diplodocus, look* [pointing to E's sweatshirt]

Amir's comment does not elicit a response as Nikita continues her conversation with Elijah. The activity continues in a similar manner for a further 4 minutes.

DINOSAUR MATCH: ANALYTIC COMMENTARY

The video data represented above was initially treated as two separate data items. It was coded and analysed at micro-level separately, from Elijah's perspective and from Amir's perspective, to capture each child's unique relations with the proximal environment. This commentary illustrates how the analytic concepts of activity settings, perezhivanie and subjectivity facilitated interpretation of children's experiences in this single concrete event in a way that illuminated, as Hedegaard (2012a) posits, a view of the 'whole', from individual to societal level.

The comparison of code application exported from Dedoose (Table 4) for a corresponding timeframe of video data, analysed as two separate data items, illustrates how the lens captured the dynamic relations of child and environment. While the micro-level codes (P1, I1, A1) code were, of course, distinct, the meso level, activity settings codes (P2, I2) also differed; demonstrating how the 'activity settings' lens did not capture an 'objective reality' of the environment, but rather captured the relations between the individual child and the environment.

TABLE 4: COMPARISON OF CODE APPLICATION IN OVERLAPPING DATA EXCEPTS IN AM13 AND E17

	Amir	Elijah
Excerpt details	AM13 12 Jan - Dinosaur book and dinosaurs.mp4 Excerpt Created On: 8/9/2018 Excerpt Range: 02:45.00-02:55.07	E17 12 Jan - Dinosaur book and dinosaurs.mp4 Excerpt Created On: 8/5/2018 Excerpt Range: 02:46.19-02:54.88
Codes Applied	A1 Marginalisation A1 Moderate interest I2 Adult fails to respond I2 Social / Peer / Group Constraint P1 Knowledge expression response P1 Observes P1 Self-positioning P1 Seeks inclusion P1 Seeks acknowledgment P2 Adult questioning P2 Peer / sibling modelling P3 Holds interest	A1 Moderate interest A1 Enjoyment A1 Satisfied I1 Expression of knowledge I2 Adult maintains interest I2 Adult responds positively I2 Enables existing knowledge P1 Developing understanding P1 Knowledge expression response P2 Adult response positive P2 Adult questioning P2 Environmental /material enablers P3 Familiarity - Links experiences P3 Holds interest P3 Provokes detailed examination P3 Mediates interaction / conversation

Through the analytic process described, interpretations of children's experiences were constructed.

Elijah's motive orientation and position

Elijah initiated the activity with, it appeared, a clear vision of matching dinosaur models to illustrations; he celebrated success when finding a match, and examined the illustrations and his models intensely, interspersed with occasional eye contact with Nikita, and a glance toward Amir. However, Elijah also identified and paid considerable attention to illustrations for which he had no match; rather than disregarding these pages, he studied each in detail, then turned to a close inspection of his various models. He directed his attention to the foci of Nikita's comments and questions, responding with varying levels of interest and sometimes with excitement. Thus, his motive orientation was both rooted in his lived history, yet simultaneously, as Chaiklin (2014) argues, evolved in the moment in relation with his environment, organising his participation.

Nikita seemed to be an important part of Elijah's activity. Having gathered all the necessary materials prior to approaching her, he could have matched the dinosaurs independently, yet he requested she join him; furthermore, he bypassed both another practitioner and me to specifically seek out Nikita. Previous rounds of the activity meant that they shared an understanding of how to participate, and of each other's roles. However, seemingly, the text and models were the focus of his attention, suggesting that the social interaction mediated the activity, rather than being the orientation in itself. So, Elijah's overriding motive orientation throughout the event could be construed as more broadly geared towards feeding his dinosaur interest and knowledge; this is what he appeared invested in, which was also a key aspect of his identity.

The demands he placed on others in the activity setting met little resistance; even his removal of Amir's model from the page, in an environment in which sharing and collaboration are promoted, went unchallenged. Nikita seemed 'in tune' with Elijah's intentions and orientated herself toward his activity, offering her almost undivided attention. Where her questions deviated from, '*is this him?*', there appeared to be a shared understanding that answering was optional.

The activity setting involved an unspoken, but collective understanding that dinosaur knowledge was valuable. Oftentimes, Nikita positioned Elijah as 'the expert', legitimising his knowledge by, for example, asking him whether her pronunciation of 'allosaurus' was correct. She enthusiastically celebrated his success when he matched a dinosaur, fostering an identity position that he seemed comfortable with, and required little assertion on his part. However,

in questioning his identification of the 'diplodocus', Nikita created a small moment of 'conflict' (Hedegaard, 2018) or a 'social collision' (Veresov, 2015); in responding to this demand, Elijah re-evaluated his initial identification, and expressed his re-evaluated view with authority.

While on the one hand the activity setting evolved moment by moment, analysis reveals the ways in which Elijah agentively configured and constructed the activity setting and his participation in it; the event did not come together by chance. He, and other social and material forces acted upon it relationally. He firstly conceived of the idea, collected the models and textbook and specifically sought Nikita. As he sat down, Elijah quite deliberately tucked his dinosaurs between the basket and Nikita, perhaps to keep them within his reach to facilitate the activity, but also safely out of reach of other children. Yet, he showed little interest in Amir, there was no indication that Elijah felt his activity, position or his dinosaurs were under threat; he neither accepted nor rejected Amir's participation. Throughout the few minutes of the episode, the intensity of affective relations was evident. He remained absorbed in the detail of the text and models, he leant in close, his gaze fixed on the detail, which, on his models he also examined with his fingertips. He then expressed excitement as he identified or matched a dinosaur; his posture lifted, he stamped his feet and the intonation, volume and speed of his speech rose, as he affected and was affected by the situation.

Amir's motive orientation and position

Noticing activity unfolding between Nikita and Elijah, Amir hurried to join them, the scene triggered Amir's interest and a desire to participate. His understandings of activity in the free-flow play sessions at nursery meant that he didn't wait to be invited, rather, he interpreted the situation as one he could join. However, arguably, his initial intentions and the potential affordance he perceived for his participation did not come about, as on joining the activity setting, he became orientated towards gaining a more inclusive position.

Unlike Elijah, he needed to place demands on the activity setting and negotiate his participation; with more frequent moments of 'conflict' or 'social collisions', the recursive process of 'figuring out' what was valuable in the activity setting, and constructing his participation accordingly, was visible in Amir's activity. Initially, he perceived dinosaur identification skills to be requisite, thus demonstrated his knowledge, quickly naming dinosaurs with his gaze directed at Nikita, arguably, seeking recognition for his expertise. Possibly, his contribution of, "*a T-Rex-aurus*" stemmed from his knowledge that T-Rex is a shortened version of 'tyrannosaurus rex', and his intention was to express and demonstrate this superior knowledge. His comment drew Nikita's attention, although she found it comical rather than impressive, and his efforts didn't gain him the more integral position he, arguably, sought. On witnessing the cheering at the dinosaur match, he re-interpreted the 'rules of

engagement', and perceiving the importance of having a model dinosaur to mediate his participation, he acted immediately, but again, without securing the position he sought.

Throughout the 7-minute episode, Amir made eleven explicit attempts at inclusion, Nikita responded briefly, but positively to five, while six of his contributions were unacknowledged. While in close proximity to the activity spatially, socially he remained on the periphery. While he also expressed the necessary knowledge to take up the position of dinosaur expert, this wasn't made available to him as it was to Elijah and his activity failed to achieve the recognition and fuller position he seemed to covet.

The misalignment or discord between Amir's intentions, the affordance he perceived for his participation and the realisation of his intentions shaped and orientated his actions; reiterating Hedegaard's (2014) position, Amir's motive orientation was fluidly relational to the evolving situation. One might have expected the affective relations to be experienced as frustration, anger or jealousy, yet these emotions were not evident in Amir's behaviours or actions. Yet neither did he accept his peripheral position, he acted agentively to subjectively reconfigure his understanding of the activity setting, and his activity in it. His participation was by no means inert or passive; he acted to shape his relations in the activity setting.

Hence, analysis highlights in detail how this single concrete activity setting was a very different experience for Elijah and Amir, however, macro level analysis, and interpretation of Nikita's participation offers yet further insights.

Nikita's motive orientation

During the few minutes comprising this activity setting, Nikita orientated herself towards Elijah's activity and her actions served to facilitate the realisation of his intentions. It's worth noting that her lack of interest in Amir in these few minutes was not typical; data recorded many interactions between Nikita and Amir that evidenced a warm relationship. When she did respond to Amir's contributions, she did so positively.

Documental data (comprising a record of the nursery planning meeting the previous week) noted that Elijah was one of the 'focus children' for 'tracking' during the week this data was gathered, meaning that he was one of three children who were the foci of practitioner's observations. Ongoing concerns regarding Elijah's language development were raised during the meeting; consequently, the lead teacher, Kate specifically asked practitioners to record examples of Elijah's language use in play. Understanding this wider agenda (underpinned, arguably by assessment criteria and normative views of development) sheds light on Nikita's focus on Elijah.

Ten days after the video data was recorded, an opportunity arose to review the footage with Nikita; she explained how she had sought ways to extend her, *'is this him?'* closed questions, into more open questions, such as, *'why is he climbing'*, to elicit dialogue that moved Elijah's language beyond simply naming dinosaurs. This conversation further revealed that Nikita had been largely unaware of how differently she interacted with each child; a few minutes into viewing the video, she spontaneously commented, *"oh no, I'm virtually ignoring him"* (RJ).

Curriculum influences were also discernible in Nikita's actions, evident when she explicitly tracked the print with her index finger, modelling of the process of phonetically segmenting graphemes to pronounce dinosaur names. However, on recognising that neither child was orientated towards phonics at that moment, she pursued it no further. Analysis of this data item in isolation would suggest Nikita's activity is orientated toward, and responsive to Elijah, however, analysis of the wider data corpus enabled through the ethnographic approach, illustrates how wider societal forces shaped Nikita's motive orientation, which influenced her activities and shaped the experiences of Elijah and Amir. This analytic framework, therefore, elucidates understandings of the child's experiences and configurations of the activity setting, while understanding those experience from individual to societal level.

UNIQUE AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH TEXTS - DISCUSSION

The data and analytic commentary serve to illustrate how this study's system of theoretical concepts facilitated the exploration of children's literacy experiences, through examining their intentions, identities and affective engagement with texts. It was necessary for the study to embrace theoretical pluralism, as this system of concepts provided analytic tools; each concept made an essential contribution to generating multi-layered understandings of children's literacy experiences. It is also worth stressing that, as Gonzales Rey and Mitjáns Martínez (2017) state, the tool; "never replaces the researcher as the producer of knowledge" (p.202); it was through deep ethnographic engagement in fieldwork and data, and through analytic thinking that themes, and findings were generated. Before discussing the conceptual space generated, I will firstly briefly recap the study's theoretical framework. Activity settings (Hedegaard, 2012a; 2014; Bang, 2009) offered a tool to understand the 'context', in the broadest sense, in which dynamic relations between child, social others and text/materials unfold. *Perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994; Veresov and Fleer, 2016; Mok, 2017; Blunden, 2016) enabled understandings of how the activity setting is experienced by the child, as refracted through their unique prism. The concepts of subjective senses and subjective configurations then offered a lens to generate insights into how the child's *perezhivanie* shapes their evolving thoughts, feelings and understandings of the circumstances affecting them (Gonzales Rey, 2008; 2012; 2017). The notion of 'text as actant' (Latour, 2005) as discussed in chapter 2, served to foreground the active contribution of the text in the dynamic relations.

Given the ambiguity of some Vygotskian concepts, it may be contentious to claim that this theoretical framework explicitly encompasses the 'social situation of development' (Vygotsky, 1994; Bozhovich, 2009). However, the analytic framework simultaneously;

- Captures the child's subjective experience and perspective (micro level)
- Retains a view of the dynamic unity of child and activity setting (meso level)
- Accounts for relations between individual, institutional, societal forces (macro level)

Thus, I argue that the study's analytic framework illuminates a conceptual space that is within the theoretical arena of contemporary understandings of the 'social situation of development'.

In this section, I discuss how this conceptual space;

1. Renders visible the child's perspective;
2. Reveals the significance of harmony and discord in the relationality of participants' intentions;
3. Supports a re-visioning of a literacy event as a personal subjective configuration.

THE CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

Previous research, reviewed in chapter 3, has explored various aspects of children's development using cultural-historical approaches to elucidate child/environment relations. The conceptual space generated in this study, however, emphasises the child's perspective in such relations. The data portrait opening this section, describes Elijah and Amir's participation in the same concrete literacy event, illustrating how this one activity setting was both a shared experience, yet a distinct personal experience for each child.

Thus, this study's findings are rooted in an understanding that the children's activity in a literacy event is socially and materially constructed, culturally shaped, but personally experienced.

The episode accentuates that neither child experienced the activity setting passively, each acted agentively, to shape their own participation. Drawing on Gonzales Rey's (2008; 2012; 2017) work, the data show that through the flow of their subjective senses or awareness's, Elijah and Amir subjectively configured understandings of the activity setting, and understandings of themselves in relation; thus, also echoing Bang (2009) who points out that children experience themselves as '*being someone*' in the situation. This theoretical lens directs the analyst's view to the child's subjective experience in the dynamic relations between him/herself and environment as a unit of analysis in itself.

The data portrait illustrates Bang's (2008) assertion that affordances for children's participation and action are constructed in context-specific relations of social others, text /materials, and self. Previously scholars theorising 'affordance' have centred on reciprocity between person and object (Gibson, 1977), or the affordance and constraints generated by societal forces (Waters, 2017) for example. So, whilst positioning affordance as relational, the analytic lens here is directed to the affordance children agentively create for themselves, and the ways in which affordance for action is personally experienced. The data portrait illustrates Amir's constructions of affordances through his activity. For example, in acting to acquire a model dinosaur, in engaging with the illustrations in the text and in asserting his dinosaur knowledge, he afforded himself participation in the activity, albeit peripheral. Hence, had either Amir or Elijah perceived the situation differently and configured different understandings, their affordances for participation would also have changed. Corsaro (2005) demonstrated how children actively participate in and construct their social worlds, which was exemplified in Daniels (2014) research, illustrating how 5-year-olds exert cultural agency to collaboratively create texts. This thesis potentially offers a more textured view of agency,

affordance and, indeed constraint by foregrounding the child's perspective and experience in dynamic relations with the environment.

HARMONY AND DISCORD

The data portrait presented also reveals how harmony and discord in the relations of participants' intentions shaped activity. The Dinosaur Match data portrait shows a clear distinction between the 'harmony' in Nikita and Elijah's intentions for participation, and, in contrast, the 'discord' experienced by Amir. So, to view the literacy event from the child's perspective, and understand their self-generated affordance, as argued above, it is necessary to elucidate their perspective through understanding the nature of relations between child and environment.

Elijah appeared orientated toward a detailed examination of dinosaur features, through which he could identify and match dinosaurs. This orientation was well-aligned with Nikita's intentions of engaging Elijah in conversation, and well-aligned with the available text and materials. Nikita seemed 'in tune' with Elijah, co-creating affordance for the realisation of his intentions, offering him a central position in the activity setting, and enabling Elijah to consolidate and expand his dinosaur knowledge through the texts, materials and activity. Although Amir may have arrived at the activity setting with intentions for his participation, his orientation, arguably shifted toward inclusion, which misaligned with Nikita's orientation toward conversation with Elijah. So, whilst Amir and Elijah both participated agentively, generating affordance for action, their agency and activity was evidently shaped by the nature of the relations.

A wide-angled overview of the data portrait suggests that 'harmony' engendered a more auspicious experience for Elijah. However, this data item was selected as it explicitly revealed the distinction, moments of harmony and discord were more subtly apparent across much of the observational data. Each activity setting comprised numerous micro-moments, illustrating the fluidity of moments of harmony and discord, and necessitating a non-binary view; hence harmony and discord may be better thought of as a continuum. Hedegaard (2012a) describes moments of 'tensions and conflicts' in social activity, whilst Veresov (2015) uses the term 'social collisions', to describe sites of potential development. Similarly, in relation to Vygotsky's (1998) discussion of 'developmental crises', Flear, (2015) comments that Vygotsky argued; 'that both the unremarkable everyday microscopic movements and the abrupt and dynamic crises each contribute to a child's development' (p.24).

This study's observational data set captured, in the main, children's unremarkable taken-for-granted everyday activity, exemplifying multiple 'social collisions' or moments of both harmony and discord. For instance, when Elijah's identification of the 'diplodocus' was challenged (Dinosaur Match, 0.55) not only did he re-evaluate his identification, but also reasserted his position as 'expert', confidently confirming that 'brontosaurus' was indeed the correct identification.

The terms 'harmony' and 'discord', however suggest a positive / negative connotation, as likewise, 'conflicts', 'tensions' and 'collisions' convey a negative undertone. Yet across the forthcoming data portraits, the micro-moments that challenged children's existing understandings and competencies, moments of discord, oftentimes evoked subjective senses that appeared to be experienced as, for example, intrigue or excitement. Thus to disrupt the positive / negative dichotomy, micro-moments could be thought of using Burnett and Merchant's (2018a) concept of 'affective encounters' (discussed in chapter 3), that is, occurrences that 'interrupt' the flow of the child's activity, evoking something that changes their perspective, not only of the specific 'in-the-moment' situation or phenomena, but that, potentially, inform generalised understandings of subsequent literacy events.

Thus, extending Hedegaard's (2014) writings on 'demands and motives' in the activity setting, the notion of harmony and discord between participants' intentions, construed as a continuum, exemplifies how the ever-shifting nature of the relations between child and environment shapes children's experiences. Understanding the nature of these relations underpins the themes presented in the forthcoming sections, contributing texture to existing theoretical perspectives. Firstly, however, I return to the wide-angled lens, applying these conceptualisations of the child's perspective, shaped by the nature of their relations, to re-imagine the concept of a literacy event as the child's own subjective configuration.

THE LITERACY EVENT AS A SUBJECTIVELY CONFIGURED LITERACY EXPERIENCE

The conceptual space discussed in this section redirects the analytic lens, offering a distinct view of young children's engagement with text. The contribution of this thesis lies in rendering visible children's personal experiences with written texts, and in doing so, challenges both universal views of literacy learning, and of literacy learning as socially determined.

In this study's conceptual space, I re-imagine the concept of the literacy event. As discussed in chapter 2, Heath (1982) and Barton and Hamilton (2000) theorised instances of literacy activity as socially situated 'literacy events'. Accordingly, the data portrait, and the study's

observational data set, illustrate the focal children's activities as socially constructed and culturally shaped.

The notion of a literacy event has recently been expanded in conceptual literature by Burnett and Merchant (2018b), who propose 'literacy-as-event' as a heuristic to give a fluid account of peoples encounters with literacy. Like these authors, I too grapple with the idea as a literacy event as a singular occurrence and seek to understand the event as relational, evolving in the moment, yet inseparable from past events, and with fluid potentialities. Thus, I propose the literacy event, or 'literacy-as-event' can be thought of as involving a literacy experience, sculpted through the child's perspective of the concrete literacy event as refracted through their personal prism of *perezhivanie*, producing subjective senses and subjective configurations. As such, the personal literacy experience is a highly complex, child-specific construct, a mobilisation of affective relations of the child and their activity settings. Thus, literacy experiences are always in flux, taking shape in the moments of discord and harmony, yet concurrently historically rooted in innumerable personal lived literacy (and broader) experiences.

This conceptualisation, however, does not position literacy as an 'individual process', as Gonzales Rey (2008) stresses, personal and social subjective configurations emerge simultaneously and are mutually supporting; the concept of subjective configurations exemplifies how, as Vygotsky (1998) asserted, the social becomes the individual. Hence, stressing the study's proposition that the literacy event is socially constructed, but personally experienced.

In the literacy experience, children subjectively configure understandings of context, text and of self. In this section, the 'Dinosaur match' data portrait foregrounded how Amir and Elijah subjectively configured affordance for participation, influencing their personal experiences. As each of the study's thematic findings are addressed in the following sections, data portraits will also exemplify how children's personal experiences shaped, and were shaped by their fluid subjective configurations of themselves as both producers and consumers of written and multimodal texts, and their understandings of what texts can do and what they can mean.

When the literacy event is conceptualised and observed as a concrete event, children's activity and behaviours, their 'changing participation' or 'literacy learning' is visible and can be measured over time. Such observations capture the outcomes of learning, but, arguably, fail to shed light on the multi-dimensional processes of children's literacy learning as evolving in dynamic relations of child, text and activity setting. I argue that, in seeking to understand children's literacy experiences as subjective configurations of a literacy event, evolving through

their ongoing engagement overtime, a more nuanced understanding of children's literacy development can emerge.

In summary, this section has detailed how the study's theorisation and analytic framework generated a conceptual space that captured literacy experiences, foregrounding the child's perspective in a literacy event, as shaped by moments of harmony and discord through which children configured understandings of the specific activity setting, understandings of themselves in relation and more general understandings of text and literacy. The conceptual space developed in this section underpins the thematic findings presented in the following sections.

PART 2 - MAKING MEANING, RELATIONSHIPS AND IDENTITIES THROUGH TEXT

Observational data captured the focal children consuming and producing a wide variety of written and multimodal text types, as shown in table 5 below. This table includes only the texts explicit in the data, it is likely that children experienced a more expansive range of texts in their everyday lives during the study timeframe.

TABLE 5: TEXT TYPES OBSERVED IN CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY

Text Categories	Specific Texts
Printed paper-based texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture storybooks • Non-fiction picture books • Comics / magazines • Catalogues • Graphic novels • Poetry cards.
Screen-based texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apps via tablet / phone • Icons • Passwords • Microsoft word documents • Webpages • You Tube • X-box games • Vtech • Nintendo DS games
Environmental and commercial print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery weather / weekdays board • Nursery / home displays and signage • Food packaging • Writing prompts books • Recipe book / cards • Popular culture logos (e.g. clothing, bags, hair accessories) • Shop / community signs • Games / DVDs sleeves • Birthday / Christmas cards • Role play props (e.g. prescriptions, restaurant menu, library / credit cards) • Community event flyers • Instruction leaflets,
Hand-written paper texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioner scribed texts • Adult naming of pictures • Peer / sibling written texts • Self-written texts (pictures, cards, lists, messages, stories, Word documents).
Names	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery coat pegs • Name cards and boards • Names on pictures • Bedroom door signs • Birthdays board • Displays

Part 2 responds to the first of the research sub-questions, exploring children's intentions for participation in literacy events. To reiterate;

- What are the child's motivations and intentions for participation?
- In what ways are expectations for participation explicitly or implicitly apparent in the activity setting?

Five data portraits exemplify a diverse range of events and the detail and breadth of children's intentions, desires and needs are examined in the analytic commentaries. The discussion then expands earlier deliberations, to explore how post humanist perspectives contributed to the

study's conceptual space and offer thoughts on how a text might contribute to dynamic relations in a literacy experience. Finally, I deliberate over what children are actually invested in when engaged in activity with written and multimodal texts.

COMICS AND CATALOGUES – DATA ITEM A43 – NOVEMBER

Anya

Context: Anya approached me as I browsed through a selection of comics and magazines in the nursery role play area. She selected the 'Fun to Learn Friends' comic and sat on the nearby sofa. The comic features characters from popular children's TV programmes such as Peppa Pig and Paw Patrol. I then selected the Tesco Christmas catalogue and joined her.

0.18



Anya initially pretended to be sleeping, snoring loudly

0.25 - LUCY - *Are you having a good snooze there?*

0.28 - ANYA - [moves the comic laughing] *Just tricked you!*

0.32 - LUCY - *You were tricking me, were you?*

Anya turns a few pages in quick succession

0.47 - ANYA - *Oh it's right over here* [pointing to a character on the page]

0.53 - ANYA - *That's Alvin and the Chipmunks*

0.56 - LUCY - *Oh I see, yes it says here, Alvin and the Chipmunks* [Pointing to text / logo]

1.03 - ANYA - *He's really cheeky* [pointing to Alvin]

1.10 - LUCY - *He's cheeky, is he?*

1.07 - ANYA - *Alvin, Alvin is really really really naughty.*

1.09 - LUCY - *What does he do that's so naughty?*

1.13 - ANYA - *Well he takes that over and he puts where, where that stand in there and he, and he, he, banged on the window and that was really scary* [pointing to different parts of the page and demonstrating banging with her hand]

1.08



2.21



2.30



1.25 - LUCY - *Really!*

Anya continues her description - audio is lost due to background noise. She then turns the page and I continue browsing the Tesco catalogue. Anya notices a 'word search' in the catalogue and looks at the page more closely.

2.03 - LUCY – [noticing her interest] *Look at all these letters?*

2.09 - ANYA - *There's 'a' and there's 's' and 'i'* [phonic sounds]

She leans in looking closely at the letters and identifying those she knows. She then begins finding matching pairs of letters

2.14 - ANYA - *'e' and 'e'* [pointing to the corresponding letters]

2.17 - LUCY - *Oh yes 'e', 'e' and 'e', they match* [pointing to letters]

2.20 - ANYA - *'s', 's', 's', 's'* [letter name] [pointing to four different letter 's' in the word search]

2.24 - LUCY - *'t', 't', 't', 't'*, [pointing] [phonic sound]

2.30 - ANYA - *'m' and 'm'* [letter name]

2.33 - LUCY – *yum, 'M and Ms'* [smiling at Anya]

2.35 – ANYA - [laughs] *M and Ms*

The activity continues for another 50 seconds, taking turns to point to matching letters, then Anya turns back to her comic and I turn the page, but she quickly returns her attention to the catalogue.

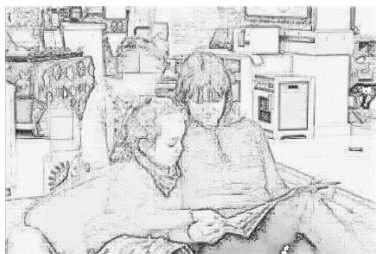
3.34 – ANYA - *Oh I've got that* [pointing to the image of a V-Tech electronic toy]
She explains something about the Vtech (audio lost).

3.41 - LUCY - *Okay so you can use all the letters*

3.44 - ANYA - *Yeah and I do love that*

She then turns her attention back to her comic briefly - another child approaches, looking over my shoulder at the toys in the catalogue and commenting, Anya turns her attention back to the catalogue.

4.21



4.27



4.32



4.14 - ANYA - [reaches over to point to the image] *Oh I love that, I really, really love that, it's amazing* [pointing to images of children in 'Disney Princess' dressing up costumes] *I want that*

4.22 - LUCY - *Okay, is that Belle that you like best?*

4.24 - ANYA - *Yes* [nodding]

Lucy asks the other child which one her favourite is; she hesitates, pondering

4.30 - ANYA - [leans over, restricting the other child's view] *And I love [exaggerated] that, that's Rapunzel*

4.34 - LUCY - *That's Rapunzel is it?*

4.36 - ANYA - *I've watched that, on my DVD at my house and she's really really brave.*

4.44 - LUCY - *I see* [turns to the next page with a Rapunzel doll]

4.47 - ANYA - *Oh that's her* [pointing to the Rapunzel image]

4.51 - LUCY - *Ahh, with the long hair?*

4.54 - ANYA - *I love her, and her and her* [pointing to each Disney Princess doll]

The other child moves away, Anya's gaze follows her momentarily, then she returns to her comic - singing to herself while looking at the pages; I continue to browse the catalogue. After 42 seconds, she then notices something across the room, puts down her comic and leaves.

This commentary draws attention to how Anya's intentions for participation evolved in relations between people, the texts and Anya herself. Although shaped by the setting's practice norms and my research intentions, the activity evolved quite spontaneously. It began playfully, as Anya hid under the comic pretending to sleep; the snoring suggested she intended to elicit a response rather than be left in peace.

The nature and the content of the two texts were fundamental to the activity setting. Both texts were meaningful and accessible to Anya, through multimodal combinations of imagery, commercial logographic print from children's popular culture alongside standard alphabetic print. She handled the comic competently, with evidently an established understanding of the nonsequential ways such texts can be read (Kress, 2000); for example, in describing Alvin's antics, her gaze and point moved around the page. Anya's familiarity with the characters and logographic print from popular children's culture enabled her to draw on her home and community-based knowledge in the nursery environment, to take up an authoritative position in the dialogue. As Dyson (2002) asserts, popular culture 'builds bridges' between children's worlds. Initially, Anya commented generally on Alvin's mischievous character, drawing on her experience; although when asked for more detail, recall did not suffice; so she reverted to the text, using the images to construct a convincing explanation to support her claims and maintain her position as 'expert'.

Anya's attention alternated between the comic and catalogue, and although her gaze passed over many different images of different toys, just a few items, those with personal significance, triggered affective engagement of noticeable intensity. The 'Vtech', for example caught her attention; notably, data gathered on my first visit to Anya's home (A52) recorded that the first of her possessions Anya wanted to show me, was her Vtech. This suggests it was an item of importance to her, and furthermore, during the photo mediation activity (A PH), the image of herself using her Vtech was the first to capture her attention. She explained that the Vtech was for 'learning letters', which she seemingly perceived as a valued skill. Thus, the image in the catalogue provoked and mediated a discussion in which she could enact an authoritative social position. On a similar note, the 'word search' provided a means for Anya to express her letter knowledge. Across Anya's data set, there is suggestion that she perceived alphabetical knowledge as valuable (e.g. A7, A27, A32). The printed letters in the word search, alongside my comments may have offered the provocation, but it was Anya who instigated the matching game, nurturing her sense of agency and allowing her to enact a literate identity she valued.

The arrival of another child coincided with reaching the Disney Princess pages of the catalogue; both aspects shaped the dynamics of the event. At this point Anya began responding to my comments more rapidly and more intensely. It is interesting how passionately she identifies as a Disney Princess fan here, as across Anya's data set, this is the only item in which they feature. Although she clearly possessed 'Rapunzel' subject knowledge, Disney Princesses were not a recurrent theme. However, in the nursery setting, Disney Princess culture was visible on many girls' clothing, hair accessories, backpacks and lunch boxes and it was not uncommon for children to come to nursery wearing Disney Princess costumes. By associating herself with Disney Princess popular culture, as Gee (2000) suggests, Anya, possibly sought to position herself within a powerful affinity group, exercising cultural capital. However, in acting to restrict the communicative and physical space of the other child, she perhaps was more invested in protecting her position in the interaction, Disney Princesses simply provided the tool.

This data and commentary foregrounds how Anya's literacy experience involved an entanglement of meanings, connections, identity positions, differing interpersonal relations, interest, emotions, and literacy skills, all of which surfaced through relations with the text. The following data portrait details Fynn's creation of a text, involving another complex entanglement of factors and relations.

‘ME WOV (LOVE) MUMMY’: DATA ITEM F21 – JANUARY
Fynn

Context: During the free-flow part of the morning, Fynn chose to visit the ‘writing workshop’ where he selected materials from the shelves to create a text. The data portrait comprises three short videos, as Fynn returned to his text at two subsequent points during the morning.

0.02



Part 1

Fynn holds his text up, showing the child opposite

0.01: FYNN - *It's wov {love} mummy*

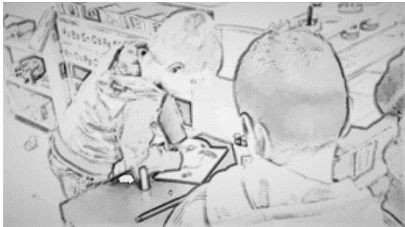
0.13



The other child briefly looks up, then turns attention back to his own text. Fynn gets up, holding his text and heads toward the drawer in which finished texts are stored.

He stops, looks at his text and returns to the table.

0.26



He selects a pen, removes the lid and makes several letter-type marks in the top left-hand corner of the paper, then replaces the pen lid and returns it before retrieving his text.

He holds his text up for another child to see

0.36: FYNN - *Look me done 'me wov mummy'*

0.37



Fynn looks at the text himself, pointing to his new marks, he makes an inaudible comment {possibly 'that my name'}

He then heads towards the drawer but is distracted by an open book on top of the unit, which he studies for 8 seconds before scanning the six possible drawers and identifying the correct drawer for his group. He looks once again at his text before placing it in the drawer.

0.13



Part 2

About 30 minutes later, Fynn returns to the drawer and retrieves his text. He looks at it, then folds it up and spends 13 seconds trying to get it into his pocket, unsuccessfully. He then unfolds the text and noticing me watching / filming he briefly makes eye contact. He flattens his text between his hands and approaches me.

Making eye contact and pointing to his marks, he says

0.26: FYNN - *Me wov mummy*

0.28: LUCY – [heard 'it's for mummy'] *Ah, I see, tell me about that*

0.31: FYNN - *This is for mummy*

0.32: LUCY - *Oh I see, you've done some writing, what does it say?*

He looks at his marks and tracks with his index finger

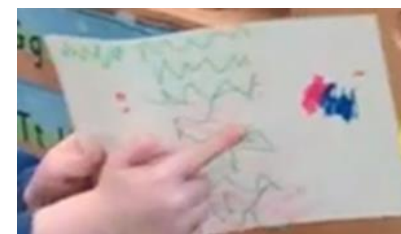
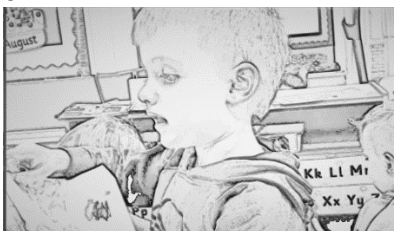
0.36: FYNN - *Me wov mummy*

0.38: LUCY - *It's for mummy?*

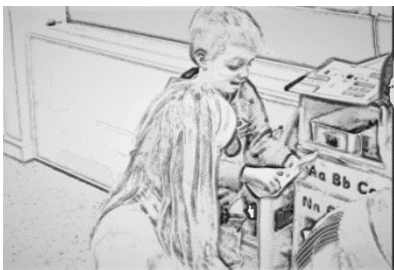
He points to the marks in the left-hand corner

0.42: FYNN - *And that is my name*

0.44



0.57



0.46: LUCY – *That's lovely {Fynn}*

Fynn walks back towards the drawer to return his text, squeezing behind a practitioner to reach, he starts to place it in the drawer, but then shows it to the practitioner pointing to the marks.

0.55: FYNN - *It's me wov mummy*

The practitioner did not hear what he said, and asks

0.57: PRACTITIONER - *Oh, what does it say?*

0.59: FYNN - *me wov mummy* [without eye contact]

He puts the text back into the drawer and leaves the area.

0.02



Part 3

At the end of the nursery session, the drawer was taken to the group to distribute children's texts to be taken home. Fynn quickly moved forward searching through the collection, seeking his text.

0.01: FYNN - *I got one*

0.02: NIKITA - *Is it in here?*

Fynn finds his text and as he picks it up, Nikita also takes hold of it

0.03: NIKITA - *Tell me about it – what is it?*

0.04: FYNN - *That's me wov mummy*

0.06: NIKITA - *It's for mummy?*

Fynn reaches over trying to take the text from Nikita

0.07: FYNN - *Yeah*

0.14



0.20



0.08: NIKITA – *I want you to tell me about it – what is it?*

0.09: FYNN – *It's me wov mummy*

0.11: NIKITA - *Is it for mummy – is it writing?*

0.13: FYNN – [points to his marks, tracking left to right with his index finger, and says slowly] *It say, me wov mummy*

0.15: NIKITA – *It says you love mummy – ahh that's amazing*

Nikita lets go of the text as Fynn takes it, quite forcefully, and sits back in his space as other texts are given out; he flattens the text between his hands and looks at it for another 6 seconds, before turning his attention back to Nikita and the group discussion.

As discussed in Fynn’s story, at the time this data was gathered, Fynn was experiencing a disrupted family life and relations between his parents were difficult. Field notes (F FNC) recorded spontaneous, but often recurrent conversations with Fynn’s mother, Danielle, in which she talked about Fynn’s challenging behaviours. On this particular day, before coming to nursery, they had disagreed about whether he should wear his wellies or school shoes.

It is impossible to draw conclusion about Fynn’s overriding intentions for creating this text, but as Rowe and Neitzel (2010) suggest; “children used writing as an opportunity to explore personally salient topics and events” (p.193), and it seems likely that the text was connected to the earlier footwear dispute, and other such incidence. His motives to author this text in this way were probably multifaceted. Possibly, after an emotionally charged situation, he wanted to make sense of conflicting emotions in his relationship; to understand how he could both be angry with and love his mother at the same time, although it is interesting that he chose to make a statement about his emotions and relationship, rather than about the incident itself. Possibly, he anticipated his mother’s positive reaction to receiving the text and was acting to resolve the dispute and mend the relationship. But whatever his underlying intentions may have been, there appears to be an interdependence between the meaning of the text, the position he feels he occupies and his emotions, as discussed by Rowe (2013).

Several of Fynn’s actions suggest that this text remained of great value to him after its production. Adding the marks, representing his name, in the left-hand corner was almost an after-thought, secondary to the main message. In Fynn’s group at nursery there were occasionally disputes at the session end regarding text authorship / ownership, when children sometimes tried to claim texts they hadn’t made; his name possibly served as a reassurance he could reclaim it. Fynn’s return to the drawer to re-engage with his text is intriguing, possibly he wanted to revisit his initial motivation for authoring, still grappling with his understanding of the situation. Alternatively, he may have wanted to check it was safe, given that he spent some time trying to get it into his pocket.

His need to share his text with others was repeatedly evident; when showing a peer (photo 0.37), he does so with intensity, rather than it being a casual passing comment. Unfortunately, his pronunciation meant that neither I, or another practitioner understood that he was ‘reading’ what the text said, and Nikita only understood after some discussion in which Fynn, with a level of frustration, tracked the print and slowly said, “*it say, me wov Mummy*”. When he finally retrieves his text, it holds his full attention for a few moments, while other children look toward Nikita and the next text from the drawer, Fynn’s gaze is fixed on the text as he

encloses it on his lap. Filming as parents collected children was not ethically feasible, but my notes recorded that when Danielle arrived, she and Fynn discussed the text, she thanked him enthusiastically, and openly conveyed her delight.



Fynn's writing is clearly intended to 'signify', but it also seemed to do so much more. In addition to the sense-making process, he engaged in what he perceived as a valued way of creating texts; that is, his marks, made in horizontal lines, tracked from left to right, using letter type shapes, represented his spoken words. Using the material resources and valued writing practices of the nursery environment, Fynn seemed to be both processing out-of-school concerns, important to him at that moment in time, and taking up an identity as a legitimate writer. I reiterate, that we cannot know exactly what Fynn intended when authoring this text, but it seems safe to say that the text itself and its creation were powerful, illustrating, as Rowe (2013) asserts, authoring is not generic, nor is it neutral.


Observation in the nursery book corner further revealed how children's engagement with texts (in these cases, picture storybooks) served multiple purposes. The following two data portraits briefly summarise children's construction, and rejection of, interpersonal relationships through engagement with books.

THE HUNGRY CATERPILLAR: DATA ITEM A15 – SEPTEMBER

Anya

Context: Anya was a little unsettled after her mother had left her at nursery, and she and I went to the book corner where she selected the Very Hungry Caterpillar (Eric Carle).

<p>1.41</p> 	<p>Anya opened the book across her lap, where I could see, but she kept hold of both edges of the book.</p> <p>On the first page Anya began to tell the story</p> <p>0.12: ANYA – <i>In the moon there was a tiny egg, and out came a hungry caterpillar.....</i></p> <p>Anya continues to tell the story, sometimes tracking the print with her index finger, but using the illustrations and recall of the narrative in her reading, pausing once to ask me what the words said. On finishing, I commented;</p> <p>2.40: LUCY – <i>Wow that was fabulous, how did you get so great at reading?</i></p> <p>Anya smiled, pointed to herself and said</p>
<p>2.47</p> 	

<p>2.55</p> 	<p>2.46: ANYA – <i>Cos that's how I do it.</i></p> <p>She then appeared slightly anxious and said:</p> <p>2.53: ANYA – <i>But that was too quick</i></p> <p>2.55: LUCY – <i>Shall we read another one?</i></p> <p>2.56: ANYA – <i>Yeah, you need to read this time.</i></p>
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THE HUNGRY CATERPILLAR: ANALYTIC COMMENTARY

This data item was gathered during Anya's first week at nursery, when she needed the reassurance of an adult to feel secure. The book was very familiar to her, enabling her to tell the story competently; it seemed important to her to enact 'reader' behaviours and position herself as 'able'. For example, she tracked the print with her index finger, giving the illusion of print reading, while paraphrasing the narrative, based on recall and illustrations. However, she hesitated, struggling to recall days of the week, and with no clues available in the text, she named random days each time. She seemed to know they were incorrect, but avoided looking up, suggesting she did not want me to intervene. On completing the food items list, however, she pointed to the print, looking at me as she asked, '*what does that say?*', in a questioning tone; so, although seeking help, she also demonstrated her knowledge about the conventions of print reading. Anya seemed to have started nursery with a tightly configured understanding of legitimate and valued reader behaviours, and she sought to be recognised as such a reader. She happily accepted the position offered by my positive comments on her reading.

Her motive orientation during book-sharing events developed over the following months, but during the first few weeks, her need to be valued appeared to be one key orientation. Simultaneously, 'feeling safe', was another key motive for Anya, evident in her brief comment '*that was too quick*'. This, arguably, was not a statement about the length of the book, but a request to read another, motivated by a fear that I was about to leave. The comment then was a request not to be left alone. This data item was reviewed with Anya's key person, who's spontaneous comments when viewing the video support this interpretation, she said; "*Ah, she's worried now, she wants you to stay with her*" (Appendix L, Practitioner review A15: excerpt 8).

During this literacy event, Anya agentively used the text to meet her needs for security and recognition, suggesting she was invested in the relationship, which was mediated by the text.

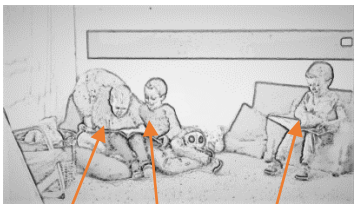

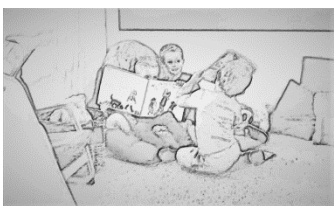

However, the following example shows Ben using books and the book corner space to maintain one peer relationship whilst rejecting another.


NEGOTIATING FRIENDSHIPS: DATA ITEM B8 – SEPTEMBER

Ben

Context: This episode began following a dispute between Ben and one of his peers. Jack had, quite assertively, tried to insist they all play with the Brio train set; Ben rejected his demands and headed to the book corner, followed by Luke, who found himself caught in the middle of the standoff. Jack then tried to re-join the friendship group.

After setting the video camera, I moved away from the area. I could sense it was an emotionally charge situation, and as nursery staff were nearby to mediate, I did not want my presence to influence children's or staff's actions. Background noise meant speech was mostly inaudible.

<p>0.03</p>  <p>Ben Luke Jack</p>	<p>Ben holds the book (Bear Hunt) and turns the pages, frequently turning to, and making eye contact with Luke, both children smile and Ben nods. Jack tries to capture their attention, holding up his book, both boys look briefly and return to their own book.</p>
<p>0.11</p> 	<p>Jack continues to try and attract attention by moving around the space, making roaring sounds and selecting and returning books at a fast pace, whilst using some inappropriate language.</p>
<p>2.33</p> 	<p>Ben frequently glances at Jack, but continues his book mediated interaction with Luke lifting the book up, perhaps to make a barrier between them and Jack.</p>
<p>2.55</p> 	<p>The teacher approaches, she speaks quietly to Jack, and gently takes him to join her in another activity.</p>

<p>3.57</p> 	<p>When Jack has left, Ben immediately discards the Bear Hunt and retrieves the book Jack had left. He opens it and without commenting, looks closely at the page. The interaction continues at a slower pace, communication now predominantly initiated by Luke.</p> <p>As Luke announces he is going to the bathroom, Ben looks up and calls after him;</p> <p>3.56: BEN - <i>'Go to that one, yeah, then come straight back'.</i></p>
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NEGOTIATING FRIENDSHIPS: ANALYTIC COMMENTARY



This data demonstrates how Ben worked hard to maintain one relationship while keeping another child excluded. Initially, Ben and Luke seemed absorbed in book related chat. Both boy's gaze alternated between the page and toward each other, there was often an entanglement of hands across the page as they both pointed to illustrations to enhance the discussion; they smiled, and Ben particularly nodded a lot, as if intending to construct a kinship, or 'we-ness' with Luke. The motive for Ben, perhaps was not the familiar book and narrative, but the relationships, the book provided a mediational tool that Ben appropriated for relationship purposes. For example, when Jack attempted to entice Ben and Luke with the book 'Shhh!' (Sally Grindley), Ben appeared disinterested, giving the illusion of being absorbed in 'Bear Hunt' (Michael Rosen). But when Jack was removed from the area, Ben discarded his book and immediately picked up the copy of 'Shhh!'; his interaction with Luke then became less intense, his gaze directed more to the page than to Luke, and he initiated fewer communications. Possibly, with Jack gone, Ben didn't need to work so hard at maintaining his friendship with Luke. Yet, he still acted to maintain the relationship, giving Luke clear instructions regarding returning from the bathroom.

These data portraits all exemplify how, in the nursery environment, texts facilitated activity that went far beyond meaning making. In home environments, children also appropriated texts for multiple purposes, as shown in the next brief data portrait and detailed in data portraits in subsequent sections.

XBOX GAMES: DATA ITEM B33 – OCTOBER

Ben

Context: During my first fieldwork visit to Ben's home, he and his brothers Nathan (7) and Jake (5) wanted to show me their Xbox. The Xbox / screen was already playing YouTube videos of the game, 'Grand Theft Auto'. The conversation was somewhat dominated by Nathan and Jake, so pointing to the pile of games cases on the table, I asked Ben to tell me about them. Nathan took control of the camera.

<p>0.01</p> 	<p>0.03 – Ben – <i>Assassin creed</i></p> <p>0.05 – NATALIE – <i>Yeah, that's Assassin's Creed, that's like in the olden times</i></p> <p>0.08 – LUCY – <i>Okay, so what about this one?</i></p> <p>0.14 – BEN - <i>Wrestling</i></p> <p>0.15 – JAKE – <i>I love that WWE</i></p> <p>0.25 – LUCY – <i>Ah, okay</i></p> <p>0.27 – BEN – <i>That's the quad</i></p> <p>0.30 – NATALIE – <i>It's motorbikes isn't it</i></p> <p>0.32 – BEN – <i>Yeah</i></p>
<p>1.04</p> 	<p>We continued, Lucy browse through the cases and Ben named the games, naming 'Halo 5' and 'Battlefield'. As I came to the penultimate case, Ben became more intensely animated</p> <p>1.05 - BEN – <i>That G 'ee' A (GTA) yeah that's G 'ee' A</i> [looking directly at me Lucy and nodding]</p> <p>1.08 – LUCY – <i>Oh, yeah, that's the one we just saw on the video</i></p> <p>1.11 – BEN – <i>Yeah, that's my favourite that.</i></p> <p>1.16 – NATALIE – <i>Yeah, it's just cos he can do motorbikes, isn't it.</i></p>

XBOX GAMES: ANALYTIC COMMENTARY

As discussed in Ben's story, the Xbox was a favourite pastime in Ben's household, not only for the three boys, but also of their father, Simon. Thus, Xbox, along with motorbikes, were highly valued elements of Ben's family culture. As an 'outsider' visiting Ben's home for the first time, I presented an opportunity for Ben and his siblings to enact identity positions, asserting their affiliation to video gaming culture. As we came to the 'GTA' case, Ben became more animated,

his posture lifted, and there was a sense of excitement as he told me that it was 'GTA'. He pronounced the letters in a very particular way, dropping the 't' for an 'ee' sound which, firstly was typical in the local accent, but secondly, he seemed to understand that there was a 'cool' way to talk about the game. As Natalie pointed out, in GTA Ben could drive virtual motorbikes, bringing together two valued elements of his family culture, supporting him, arguably, to participate more fully in the valued cultural practices of his family.

However, Ben's video gaming practices were not transferable into the nursery environment. Whilst the nursery owned iPads and there was an interactive whiteboard and a desktop computer, the apps and software installed were 'educational' and 'age appropriate' for nursery children. The Xbox games Ben played were all rated for ages 18+, and thus, understandably were not represented in the nursery setting, and furthermore, Ben's gaming would have been considered very inappropriate by nursery practitioners. Hence, where Elijah's 'dinosaur' funds of knowledge, or Fynn's 'Spiderman' affinity, were transferable between the home and nursery settings, Ben's gaming knowledge was not.

MAKING MEANING, RELATIONSHIPS AND IDENTITIES THROUGH TEXTS - DISCUSSION

The data portraits, and study's data corpus exemplify how an abundance of written and multimodal texts, hosted by multiple media, were interwoven into children's everyday lives. Whilst, as discussed previously, I narrowed the study's lens to examine text-based literacy events, the boundaries of what is, and is not such an event are somewhat blurred. In the complexity and fluidity of children's literacy experiences, the influence and significance of the text / materials shifted and evolved in dynamic relation with human participants and contexts. Texts were oftentimes so 'taken for granted' in children's practices that their influence could easily remain inconspicuous until specifically foregrounded in research. Texts, at times were central to the activity, potentially affecting the focal children, yet at othertimes, texts were peripheral in the activity setting, subtly influencing relations and action. Hence, before turning the discussion to the question of children's intentions in literacy events, I firstly explore how post humanist theories contributed to the study's conceptual space and discuss different positionings of the text in the dynamic relations shaping children's experiences.

Texts: mediators or actants?

This question arises from combining two distinct theoretical perspectives; cultural-historical and post humanist. From sociocultural and cultural-historical perspectives, human communicative systems, including language and literacies are considered mediational tools (Lee and Smagorinsky, 2000); written and multimodal texts are, therefore conceptualised as transitive. New materialist or post-humanist perspectives however, challenge such anthropocentric views and work to 'de-centre' the human, by positioning materials, such as a text, as 'actants' (Latour, 2005), impacting on the human participants by 'virtue of existing' (Rautio, 2013, p.397). While these two theoretical positions, at surface level, may appear incompatible, I argue that in this study they were mutually enriching; both theoretical positions stress 'relationality'. Whilst cultural-historical scholars seek to view the dynamic / dialectical relations of child, social others, objects and context, the focus is on the materials as cultural artefacts upon which meaning is socially bestowed. Post-humanist perspectives, however, take a non-hierarchical stance, viewing relations of people and materials as intra-action (Barad, 2008) purporting that the human and non-human can only act in relation to one another in the moment, people and materials are active participants, or actants. In analysing the data through both lenses, these findings blur the theoretical division, eliciting the question

of whether written or multimodal texts are mediators, or actants? Are texts simply tools that only afford action when appropriated by human actors? Or is a text, in and of itself, agential?

Throughout the data presented thus far and in subsequent sections, the text was, at times powerful, capable of disrupting a situation, provoking an intense affective response, altering a child's intentions and the trajectory of their activity. For example, in 'comics and catalogues', personally significant images and logographic print of the 'Vtech' electronic device, evoked subjective senses for Anya, while other images and logos evoked no notable response. The text Fynn produced mediated his expression of issues troubling him, but subsequently, it drew him back to re-engage with the material item. Yet the 'Bear Hunt' book was 'put to use' by Ben and Luke to exclude Jack from the interaction; the book was an ideal shape, size and weight to create a physical barrier between them and Jack, whilst also carrying a familiar narrative in an accessible mode, providing a focal point for their interaction.

Thus, as this study's analytic work sought to elucidate dynamic relations in the activity setting, texts were construed as both mediators and actants simultaneously, as too were the human participants. Accordingly, this study's relational lens positions agency as distributed, that is not to say it is evenly distributed, but rather agency shifts from moment to moment in the instability of the flow of activity; each human and material participant has the potential to be an 'active agent' or 'active mediator' in the relations, and to affect others.

However, conceptualising the text as active evokes further questions, regarding the ways in which, and by what means a text actively shapes relations and the child's experience. Texts are complex things, comprising materials (paper, card, plastic, metal), semiotic modes (alphabetic print, image, colour, font size and shape, for example) and subject matter (the creator authored a text 'about' something). Many data exemplify how each of these elements worked together for the text to act in the dynamic relations. For example, the forthcoming data portrait 'All about the stickers' (E 46) describes how Elijah 'intra-acted' with the dinosaur subject matter of a comic through the multimodality of the text, and through appropriating stickers and pens on the pages to both consume and produce the text concurrently.

Both the multimodality (Flewitt, 2013; Kress, 2010; Siegel, 2006) and materiality (Burnett et al., 2014; Merchant, 2017) of children's textual engagement have been examined in recent research; these aspects have been brought together within a broadly sociocultural framework to explore the personal meaning that artefacts hold for individuals (Pahl and Rowsell, 2013; Burnett et al., 2014). However, within these discourses, the personal significance of the 'subject matter' has, arguably become side-lined. In positioning texts as actants in this research, issues of materiality and modality are combined with previous academic work around 'subject matter'. In particular, Rosenblatt's (1978) seminal work highlighted how a

reader transacts with a text to construct meanings compatible with their current social understandings. Similarly, Seilman and Larsen (1989) explored personal resonance, or ‘reminders’ that arise when a reader is reminded of previous personal experience in literary texts. More recently, Sipe (2008) revealed the sophistication of children’s personally and intertextually framed responses to literature. Whilst these scholars all focus on engagement with more conventional ‘literature’, personal significance of the subject matter, such as Ben’s Xbox games, was evident in children’s interactions across a broad range of texts.

Hence, to explore how a text influenced children’s subjective configurations, its materiality, modality and subject matter need to be analysed concurrently, and in unity to fully understand how a text can be thought of as an active mediator and active agent in the dynamic relations; as Burnett and Merchant (2019) propose, literacy can be construed as a social – material – semiotic encounter.

Drawing on post humanist perspectives in this predominantly culturally-historically framed study has brought the significance and nature of the text into the foreground, offering a fresh view of dynamic and dialectical relations in children’s literacy events. Thus, taking this understanding of child / text relations, I now return the lens to the child’s *perezhivanie* and subjectivity.

Children’s intentions for participation in literacy

After constructing a view of text as both an active mediator and agent, this section responds to the study’s question of children’s intentions. Accordingly, I return to the anthropocentric view, aiming to see beyond what children ‘were *actually* doing with literacy’, and puzzle over what they were actually invested in when participating in literacy events.

Through focusing on micro-moments between children and texts, these findings build upon Dyson’s (1997; 2002; 2003; 2013) research, which evidenced how young children expertly appropriate and re-purpose literacy practices from different domains of their lives, to address their ‘in-the-moment’ interests, issues and concerns to satisfy their motives and fulfil personal needs. In addition, the discussion here echoes and further unpacks Vygotsky’s (1978) assertion that; “reading and writing must be something that the child needs” (p.117). However, what a child ‘needs’ can be viewed with both a wide-angled, and narrow lens. At societal level, literacy can be viewed as something people *need* to participate fully as citizens, for their own, and society’s well-being and prosperity (European Literacy Policy Network, 2012). Yet, the micro-level analysis of this study illuminates, for example, that at one moment in time, Anya *needed* reading to feel safe.

The data portraits illustrate that texts were more than carriers of linguistic messages; whether as a consumer or producer of text, children's intentions went beyond meaning making or communicative purposes (Rowe, 2013). In the everyday nursery and family practices observed, the focal children appropriated and re-purposed text to address multiple diverse aims and aspirations. The study's 231 observational data items could each potentially illustrate ways in which children's distinct intentions, desires and needs for texts unfolded. Nonetheless, the data portraits presented serve as examples of events that, at surface level, were typical activities in everyday practices. Yet, micro-level analysis elucidated children appropriating texts for varying combinations of purposes; for example, but not limited to, negotiating interpersonal relationships (AM13, A43, A15, B8, A32); socially positioning themselves and others (A43, F21, A15, B33, B15b, E46, AM5, A32, F27, B24); expressing and communicating ideas (E17, A32, AM13, AM5, A43, F21, E46, B24, F27); demonstrating skill (A43, AM13, E17; A15, E46, B15b, A32); constructing identities (A43, A15, B33, E46, AM5, B15b, A32, F27, B24); possibly making sense of an emotionally charged event (F21, B8); making connections in their life experiences (A43, E17, F21, E46, E9, A32, AM5, F27); extending knowledge (E17, AM13, E46); maintaining safe spaces (A15, B8); and simply for enjoyment (A43, E46, F10). Texts can then be viewed as shaping not only children's participation in a literacy event, but in doing so, shaping their understandings of the world, their identities and their relationships.

Coding of children's discernible intentions in the minutiae of each data extract provided insight into their moment-to-moment intentions for action, and a view of their broader motive orientations for participation, albeit fluid and relational. In 'comics and catalogues' (A43) for example, Anya appears most frequently invested into the relationship, whilst simultaneously constructing identity positions and generating and communicating meaning from the text. Yet, as the dynamics changed with the arrival of another child, her social position in the literacy event, perhaps, became her priority, she appeared to work to dominate the communicative space. Returning to 'dinosaur match' (E17/AM13), Elijah's attention and gaze was predominantly directed to the text and toys; he appeared most invested into further developing his dinosaur knowledge, actively mediated by the relationship with Nikita. Amir, on the other hand, seemed to be working to invest into the relationship, mediated through the text.

Whilst the intention of Fynn's text production in 'me wov mummy' (F21) is not obvious, his actions tentatively suggest he was invested in making meaning of a situation, through producing, sharing and re-engaging with the text. Yet, it is unclear who the intended audience was. He appeared to have a strong need to share the text, possibly using social interactions to make sense through verbal expression, as well as written representation. However, he also returned to his text, and spent a moment gazing at it independently, re-engaging in a personal

intra-action with his own text, and thus, unsettling the text producer / consumer binary. In mis-hearing Fynn's speech, it was the adults who kept proposing that the text was for his mother, Fynn didn't spontaneously offer this information, although, upon her arrival, he enthusiastically presented it to her, resulting in a warm and affectionate interaction.

This section has argued that to fully understand the child's personal experience, it is necessary to understand their intentions for participation as relational in the activity setting, and seek to explore what children are actually investing in. Discussing reciprocity in children's early writing, Dyson (2013) quotes Nelson (2007) who asserts "the lifelong adventure of gathering meaning from experience is in the service of two overriding motivations – to make sense and to make relationships" (p.14-15). Although applying an alternative theoretical lens, this study has evidenced findings that both align with and extend this assertion. Hence, in responding to the question of children's intentions in literacy events, the study's findings suggest that in dynamic relations children were broadly orientated toward, or invested in fluid combinations of making meaning, making relationships and making identities.

Through capturing this broader view of what children actually do with text, the notion of children's interest in literacy is also problematised. The following section explores the focal children's interest in different texts, positioning interest as a manifestation of the affective relations in a literacy event.

PART 3 - CHILDREN'S INTEREST[S] IN TEXT AND LITERACY

The notion that young children's interest in literacy related activity influences acquisition of emergent literacy skills, such as letter knowledge and phoneme isolation (Carroll et al, 2019; Hume, et al., 2016), and influences the nature of their participation in literacy practices (e.g. Harste et al., 1984; Kress, 1997; Dyson, 2002; Rowsell and Pahl, 2007) is well established in research; this section builds upon the latter.

This exploration of the theme of 'interest' builds on the study's theoretical propositions that children's literacy experiences are subjective configurations of the concrete literacy event, in which children strive to make meaning, make relationships and make identities; from this conceptual space, the theme of 'interest[s] in text' is debated. As detailed in chapter 3, in everyday usage 'interest' is a versatile term; research and academic literature encompass multiple definitions and theoretical constructions of interest.

The findings and discussion presented here respond (indirectly) to the third strand of sub-questions relating to children's affective relations. To reiterate;

- What is the nature of the child's affective engagement in the activity setting?
- What aspects of the activity setting are affectively influencing the child?

The theme of 'interest in text' was initially generated through coding in the domain of 'affective relations', and developed through further analysis to theorise how, through the affective nature of their engagement in literacy events, children generated a 'will' to engage, sustain engagement or re-engage with texts, and do so in a particular manner. Thereby, this section contributes to previous research of children's interest, and through these findings, I suggest that 'interest' can be viewed as a manifestation of affect emerging from the dynamic relations of the literacy event.

The findings and discussion herein are evidenced through three data portraits. The first, 'It's all about the stickers!' (E46), portrays an extended literacy event during a visit to Elijah's home in which, amongst the flow of multiple activities, he repeatedly returned to a text. Two further data items portray Amir, Fynn (Gorilla, AM5/F10) and Elijah's (Złotowłosa, E9) participation in more unusual practitioner-led read alouds at nursery.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE STICKERS! - DATA ITEM E46 – APRIL
Elijah

Context: This video data (36.18 minutes) was recorded during my third visit to Elijah's home; his mother, Julie and Sister, Matilda (6) were also there. I arrived with two comics, 'Andy's Amazing Adventures' (a dinosaur themed comic) and 'National Geographic Kids'. Throughout the episode, the foci of Elijah's activity shifted between his comic, social interactions and dialogue, and Matilda's activity. Multiple other interactions flowed simultaneously between varying combinations of participants and texts / materials.

Before filming began, Elijah had taken his comic from me and immediately sat down on the floor, removed the 'free gift' pack and opened the comic at the centre page, carefully removing the sticker sheet; he then closed the comic again to begin at the front cover. Matilda sat nearby, struggling to open the 'heavy-duty' packaging of her comic, Julie and I joined them sitting on the floor, where I set up the camera.

0.15



0.01 - ELIJAH – *Stickers, I'm doing stickers*

0.03 - LUCY - *So is there a special place for the stickers to go?*

0.05 - ELIJAH - *Yeah*

0.06 - LUCY – *You show me*

0.08 - ELIJAH - [points to a space on the page, tapping his finger up and down]

0.12 - LUCY - *Right, I see* [points to written text] *it says tick and stick when you spot the dinos*

0.13 - ELIJAH - [looks closely at page of stickers, and selects one] *Ah there's ??* [removes sticker]

Matilda requests help to open the packaging of her 'free gift', Elijah offers, and passes Lucy his sticker while he takes the package. Once open, Elijah passes Matilda the package content, and everyone's attention shifts to the slimy toy bug, until Elijah spontaneously returns to his comic.

0.33



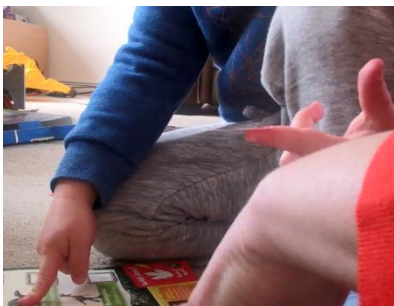
- 2.03 - LUCY - *Look, I've still got your sticker here* [holding the sticker up to Elijah, who takes it]
2.06 - ELIJAH - [studies the comic page closely, then places his sticker in the corresponding space]
2.09 - JULIE - *Is that the right one? Yes, it is!*
2.13 - JULIE - *What's that one called?* [pause] {Elijah} *what's that one called?*
2.18 - ELIJAH - *Deinonychus* [said slowly and carefully]
2.20 - JULIE - *Yep*

Elijah continues the activity, whilst dialogue evolves between Julie, Matilda and Lucy.

- 2.30 - ELIJAH - *There's a shadow* [pointing at a dinosaur silhouette on the page, then he tries to attract Julies attention] *mummy, mummy, mummy* [Julie acknowledges him but finishes her discussion with Lucy]
2.41 - JULIE - *Okay, what have you got there?*
2.47 - ELIJAH [Places his sticker in the corresponding space] *Mummy*, [although tapping Lucy] *me've done this one*
2.50 - LUCY - *Oh that one , and what's that one called?*
2.53 - ELIJAH - *I don't know*
2.55 - LUCY - *Is it the same as this?* [pointing to another image]
3.14 - ELIJAH - *Mummy can you help?*
3.16 - JULIE - *Which one are you trying to find?* [pauses, while Elijah scans the page of stickers]
3.28 - JULIE - *The camptosaurus* [said slowly as she phonetically reads the text]
3.31 - ELIJAH - *Yeah camptosaurus* [repeating, but producing the word effortlessly]

Elijah continues, focused on the stickers, sometime independently and sometime engaging in dialogue. He completes the activity and both Julie and Lucy congratulate him, which, however he doesn't explicitly acknowledge.

3.14



6.25



16.26



Matilda draws everyone's attention, demonstrating how the eyes of her toy octopus pop out. Elijah asks for a turn and together he and Matilda pop out the eyes, then he returns to his comic turning the page toward Lucy, pointing to the written text.

5.42 - ELIJAH - *Look these*

5.45 - LUCY - *Okay, it says 'circle when you stick'*

5.50 - ELIJAH – [places sticker in the defined space on the page]

5.51 - LUCY - *So do you want my pen and you can do a circle on the umm, toxodon* [hands Elijah a biro]

6.02 - ELIJAH – *I need to go round* [attempts to draw around the image]

Elijah struggles with the pen, Julie adjusts his grip and he carefully makes a circle around the dinosaur.

Throughout the following twelve minutes, Elijah continues alternating between the comic and joining Matilda in her activities, such as hiding bugs, and 'doctor's' role-play.

Elijah turns to a 'story page', which included a page with questions about the text, with pictorial multiple-choice answers (one correct and one ridiculous answer, presumably intended to amuse). Matilda joined him and spontaneously read the question, Elijah retrieves the pen, anticipating the activity.

19.38 - MATILDA - *I went back in time 22 million years to find some Proterosuchus teeth or a tin of beans?*

Elijah begins making a mark in the box corresponding to the 'tin of beans'

19.50 - MATILDA - *No, no, no, no, that* [pointing to the correct box]

19.53 - JULIE - *You have to tick the right answer, which one is the right answer*

19.55 - MATILDA - *No, [forcefully] that one*

20.09



Elijah continues marking the box. He puts a cross in the 'beans box' and then begins making a circle around the 'Proterosuchus teeth' box.

20.14 - JULIE - *For the teeth?*

20.16 - ELIJAH - *Yeah*

20.17 - LUCY - *So he went back for some teeth*

20.24 - ELIJAH - *There!*

Elijah draws around the box again, making his mark more vivid, then sat back, as if to admire it. He begins marking the next answer, although no one has yet read the question.

20.29 - MATILDA - *No no no*, [points to and reads the instructions] *'tick your answer', {Elijah} you're doing it wrong*

20.33 - JULIE - *He's doing a cross*

20.35 - MATILDA - *Oh* [then reads the question] *I fell off the* [pauses at Proterosuchus]

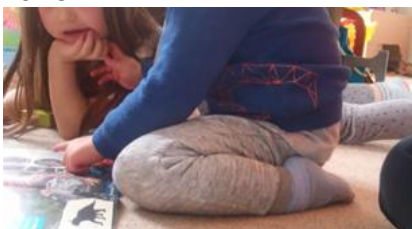
20.39 - ELIJAH - *Waterfall* [anticipating the answer]

20.40 - JULIE - *Proterosuchus*

20.42 - MATILDA - *And got wet in the*

20.47 - ELIJAH - *Waterfall* [providing the answer]

20.45



31.06



Elijah turns the page to the next activity; a series of clues to dinosaurs with corresponding stickers. Julie read the clues and Elijah points to features on the sticker image, before constructing his own clue.

22.16 - ELIJAH - *He's got trunk and teeth and and snap* [clapping his hands together].

Meanwhile, Matilda turned to the page intended for free drawing. For the remainder of the episode, Elijah's attention was directed toward Matilda's drawing, making suggestions and finding pictures for her to copy.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE STICKERS! : ANALYTIC COMMENTARY

The episode again exemplifies how Elijah's intentions moved fluidly between meaning-making, identity-making and relationship-making, however, the aim of this commentary is to explore how his interest[s], his will to engage, sustain engagement or re-engage with the text manifested through these intentions and through the flow of affective relations.

Julie's comments throughout the episode shed light on Elijah's activity; she revealed that Elijah was familiar with 'Andy's Amazing Adventures' comics as they purchased a copy each month, and in fact, he had already had a copy of this issue. She explained that he liked the sticker activities best, and always completed those first. Julie twice referred to Elijah's methodical approach, explaining that he worked through the sticker activities in order, always completing one before beginning the next. She also explained that Elijah frequently watched the corresponding Cbeebies TV show, and used the website, which featured the same narratives and activities as the comic, although through different media. Thus, Elijah's familiarity with the comic and narratives meant that he approached this activity setting with an established understanding of 'how' to participate.

In the flow of the activity setting, multiple interactions unfolded simultaneously, and on eight occasions, Elijah diverted his attention to some of these, but not to others. Helping Matilda open the packaging seemed to evoke a sense of 'accomplishment', as he handed her the toy. He appeared intrigued by the octopus, exploring how its eyes 'popped out', and when joining Matilda in 'hiding bugs' he appeared amused, giggling at my playful response to the bugs. Each of these could be construed as an 'affective encounter' (Burnett and Merchant, 2018a), which, as the authors propose, interrupted the course of Elijah's activity, and offered a potential new line of action. However, there were other happenings in the activity setting, that potentially would have been of interest to Elijah, that he chose not to participate in. For example, Matilda and I explored how the 'sticky bugs' stuck to the page of her comic, and Julie and I talked about the Natural History Museum's diplodocus, and about the Cbeebies TV show related to the comic, yet these interactions did not trigger any discernible response.

Nonetheless, on each occasion his attention diverted from the comic, he spontaneously returned, drawn back to continue the activity task from the point he'd left it. His relations with the comic just put on hold, while something else came to the fore. Hence, as Leontiev (1978), argued, Elijah's activity, and the foci of his interest throughout the event is more complex than 'environmental stimuli / child response': it is not clear why he attended to some aspects of the activity setting, but not others.

However, turning to Elijah's interest and activity with the comic, throughout the episode, he seemed to appropriate knowledge from multiple sources, such as his previous encounters with the comic series, his extensive dinosaur knowledge and his experience of the TV show and website. He understood that print was a source of information, evident as he sought assistance to access dinosaur names. In addition, he perceived affordances for the stickers to signify and demonstrate his knowledge and skill. Furthermore, the 'sticker activities' in each issue of the comic involved some sort of 'pairing' such as matching stickers to silhouettes. So, it is intriguing that Elijah's ongoing 'dinosaur match' (E17) activities in the nursery setting, also involved pairing dinosaurs. From this perspective, his personal history can be construed as crucial to his interest in any present event.

Autonomy and agency seemed important to Elijah, his requests for help tended to be specific requests to read dinosaur names, giving him, arguably some control over the interaction. He persisted with deviating from the instructions, and in spite of his sister's objections, placed a cross in the incorrect box. Thereby, he seemed to be appropriating previous understandings of how crosses, ticks and circles signify in a text, and used this as a means of empowerment. He was willing to risk the dispute with his sister to assert his agency and autonomy.

Analysis of this event, alongside the data corpus and my ethnographic knowledge provide nuanced insight into Elijah's ongoing, and longstanding interest in dinosaurs. Children's 'interest' in non-volitional activity offers another perspective, as exemplified in the following data portraits.

PRACTITIONER-LED READ ALOUDS

Data represented thus far have portrayed children engaged in mostly volitional activity and although often involving adults, the focal children had substantial agency, choice and negotiating power. However, the nursery's daily routine included two mandatory group-activity sessions (each 15 – 20-minutes), when children returned to their key group area; typically, one such session each day involved a practitioner-led 'read-aloud'. Across the data corpus, 46 data items recorded these read-aloud sessions. However, I regarded the two represented here as 'atypical'. The first portrays Amir and Fynn's participation whilst Nikita read aloud a book that Amir had brought to nursery from the local library. The second shows Elijah's activity when participating in a group read-aloud in Polish.

GORILLA (ANTHONY BROWNE): DATA ITEM AM5 / F10 – FEBRUARY
Amir and Fynn

Context: Nikita's group were due to visit the local library, and throughout the previous few days there had been some group discussion and planning. This had inspired Amir to take one of his current library books from home into nursery, which Nikita agreed to read to the group later that morning. The data captured both Amir and Fynn's participation.

0.09



Nikita Fynn Amir

The session began with further group discussion about the library, to which Amir contributed, explaining about 'borrowing books'. Fynn, did not contribute verbally, his gaze alternated between the book and the various speakers.

1.08 – NIKITA – *Have you read this story yet {Amir}?*

1.10 – AMIR – *Yeah*

1.10 – NIKITA – *So do you know who this is?*
 [pointing image of a child on the cover] *Has she got a name?*

1.12 – AMIR [looks up and to the left, as if struggling to recall] *Umm, yeah, [pause] she called Goldilocks.*

1.17 – NIKITA – *Is she, in the story, is that her name?*

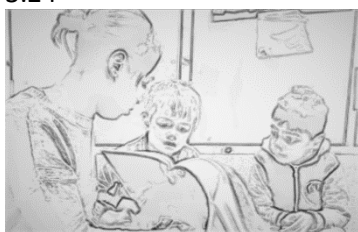
1.19 – AMIR – *Yeah*

1.20 – NIKITA – *Let's have a look, [turns to second page] ahh, here it is, her name's Hannah.*

1.12







3.24



Nikita pointed out the images on the end pages, several children commented, including Amir. Again, Fynn's gaze moved between the page and the different speakers. Nikita read aloud, intermittently making eye contact with children and passing the book around the circle. Fynn moved into a better position to see the text, his facial expression indicating curiosity / intrigue. During the first few pages, Nikita kept the verbal narrative continuous, deterring children's verbal contributions, until, a few pages in, she commented;

4.04 – NIKITA – *She didn't want a toy, she wanted a real gorilla for her birthday.*

Amir's posture lifted as he spontaneously said;

<p>4.29</p> 	<p>4.09 - AMIR – <i>How about a, a real gorilla, uhh, there's a real gorilla</i> [anticipating the narrative]</p> <p>Nikita nodded and continued reading, her intonation, pace and expressions building suspense.</p>
<p>5.05</p> 	<p>4.29 – NIKITA – <i>'In the night something amazing happened'. What happened?</i> [looking around the group]</p> <p>4.39 – AMIR – <i>A giant gorilla</i></p> <p>4.42 – NIKITA – <i>So what happened?</i></p> <p>4.45 – AMIR – <i>He shrink up</i></p> <p>4.50 – NIKITA – [moves book around the circle] <i>He got bigger, he grew, shrink is getting smaller, he grew.</i></p>
<p>7.44</p> 	<p>Fynn's appeared absorbed in the narrative. The episode continued with Amir and two other children making occasional verbal contributions, both spontaneously and in response to Nikita's questions.</p> <p>On one page, Nikita directly asked Fynn what he thinks the protagonists were watching at the cinema, He smiles / laughs and responded excitedly;</p>
<p>11.51</p> 	<p>7.42 – FYNN – <i>Super Gorilla</i></p> <p>Nikita finished the story, and then returned to some of the illustrations giving a brief commentary. Fynn's moved closer examining detail in the text.</p>

GORILLA: ANALYTIC COMMENTARY

Amir and his family were regular visitors to the local library, Fynn, in contrast had not visited the library at the time this data was gathered. Thus, Amir could contribute to the related discussion with authority and confidence. Fynn, who was usually an active participant in group discussions, remained on the periphery of the dialogue, although his direction of gaze and expression suggested he was attentive to the evolving conversation.

The book, physically speaking, had travelled with Amir between the library, his home and nursery, and in combination with his established knowledge of the text and narrative, afforded him 'fuller' participation, and a unique position in this episode. Amir appeared keen to

contribute to discussion and share his knowledge of the narrative. Anticipating and vocalising events seemed to raise the intensity of his affective engagement, at these times a level of excitement and urgency accompanied his verbal comments. His activity could be perceived as a combination of 'demonstrating' his knowledge, and hence self-positioning, and enriching his personal understanding of the narrative; Nikita's gentle critiques of two of his responses didn't seem to deter him. Although, while he seemed keen to capitalise on opportunities for fuller participation, concurrently, and compliant with group etiquette, he was also quietly attentive during Nikita's reading and to other children's comments.

Fynn's participation can also be thought of as highly engaged, but in a very different manner, and from a different position. The concept of a 'library' was unfamiliar to him, as too was the text. From a funds of knowledge perspective, Fynn had less experience upon which to



IMAGE FROM 'GORILLA'
(ANTHONY BROWNE)

construct his participation.

Although, when directly asked for his views, Fynn responded, and seemed quite amused at his own response. Using the image, he appropriated his extensive knowledge of Superhero popular culture and replaced 'Superman' with 'Super-gorilla'.

On the one hand Fynn's limited experience might be thought of as inhibiting his active participation, yet he seemed deeply engaged throughout. Nikita's animated storytelling, combining posture, gesture and facial expression, alongside varied intonation, volume and pace built an atmosphere of suspense, and as she did so Fynn appeared drawn in. Spatially, he wasn't well positioned to see the text, and frequently adjusted his position in relation to Nikita and the book, often leaning to the left.

Both Amir and Fynn remained engaged and interested throughout the episode, although their interest manifested differently. From the perspective of a curriculum that follows children's *interests*, this episode can be construed as one highly connected to Amir's interests, but less connected to Fynn's. However, although Fynn may have participated less 'actively', he appeared deeply involved and interested.

ZŁOTOWŁOSA (GOLDILOCKS, IN POLISH): DATA ITEM E9 – FEBRUARY Elijah

Context: In the days before this episode, a discussion had evolved in Elijah's Key group about languages. Of the twelve children, three spoke Polish as first language, one Lithuanian and one Urdu; 7 were English monolingual. This resulted in their Key Person arranging for a Polish speaking practitioner, Mariana, to visit the group to read 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' in

Polish. As a recent ‘focus story’ the children were very familiar with the text. Mariana used an oversized version of the picture storybook, and some individual pictures of the characters, the bowls of porridge, the chairs, and the beds.

1.19



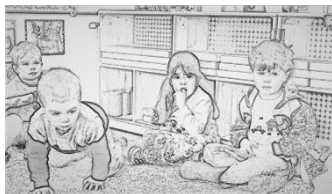
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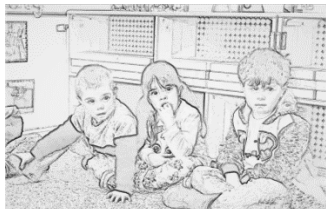
3.26



4.01



5.02



6.07



Mariana spreads all the pictures out on the floor and introduces each character or item in English and Polish, for example;

1.24 MARIANA – *This is ‘Daddy Bear’, so in Polish he is ‘Papa Miś’*

She continues through all the pictures asking the children to repeat; Elijah joins in repeating the Polish words.

As Mariana begins reading Elijah leans in, his gaze alternating between the book, the pictures and Mariana. His facial expression suggests confusion and after 44 seconds, he comments;

3.26 - ELIJAH – *No, no, read, you need to read it*

Mariana doesn’t respond and continues reading in Polish. Elijah continues to look closely at the pictures, looking bemused, he moves forward, seemingly intending to examine the picture, However, Mariana pauses and directs Elijah back to his space.

His gaze remains directed toward the texts until he asks;

5.04 – ELIJAH – *Where’s the bear?* [pause] *Where’s the bear?*



Mariana continues reading. Elijah’s gaze drifts toward the window before he comments;

5.18 – ELIJAH – *I’m wet, {Mariana}.*

Mariana continues reading and Elijah puts his hands inside his boots, he gazes toward the window, then back to Mariana and the text, his hands still in his boots, before removing them and announcing;

6.10 – ELIJAH – *I have sand in my wellie boots,*
[looks at Mariana] *Sand*

Elijah begins dusting sand off his socks and comments again about the sand in his boots. He puts his hands inside his boots, feeling the sand, his gaze alternates between the

<p>7.29</p> 	<p>storytelling and his boots. However, on lifting his arms, with the boots still attached, he notices the sand pouring out onto the floor and begins brushing it away, again trying to attract Mariana's attention;</p> <p>8.19 – ELIJAH – {Mariana} <i>I've got sand, I've got sand</i> [holding the boots up] <i>I've got sand</i>.</p>
<p>9.08</p> 	<p>Elijah's gaze returns to the book for 22 seconds before he again investigates the sand, attempting to pour it all into one boot. At the end of the story, Mariana says, in English, 'Finished now', and Elijah informs her once again about the sand.</p>

ZŁOTOWŁOSA: ANALYTIC COMMENTARY

Eleven data items recorded Elijah's participation during adult-led read-alouds in nursery (E1 – E11), and although he rarely 'sat still' during these episodes, discernible indicators in his activity and behaviours suggested he was usually highly engaged with the narrative. Likewise, interview transcripts recorded his mother's comment that; *"He likes reading, he has a story before bed [] yeah he likes his books"* (E PIT: 3.30). Broadly, his key person agreed stating; *"He still loves his stories, but it is dependent on his own levels of interest [] occasionally there something that doesn't engage him, but usually he's right in there and he's got really good recall"* (E KPIT: 1.43); both also commented that, when book choice was volitional, he tended to select dinosaur related books.

Initially, in this episode Elijah attempted to repeat the Polish vocabulary, he seemed amused by the unfamiliar sound. Being conversant with the text, he perhaps anticipated the narrative to come, however, as Mariana began to read, his facial expression and body language changed, his posture lowered a little and his expression suggested confusion. As the reading commenced, he seemed to be trying to 'work-out' why the language did not correspond with his experience and knowledge of the narrative or with the pictorial texts in front of him. In directing Mariana to 'read' the text, his comment suggests that in those 44 seconds, he had constructed an understanding of the problem and formulated a solution, she just needed to read the words, although his suggestion was unheeded. During this time, his attention was directed to Mariana and the texts, and when he crawled forward, his gaze was fixed on one particular picture, before he was directed back.

Thus, when conceptualised as an affective encounter (Burnett and Merchant, 2018a), what to Elijah was non-sensical language, interrupted the situation generating confusion which arguably, initially evoked intense interest, not in the text itself, but in the unsettling of his expectations and understanding of the narrative.

It was about five minutes into the episode and two and a half minutes into the reading that Elijah first shifts his attention away from the story. For a while, although aware of the sand, manipulating it with his fingers, his attention was intermittently drawn back to the texts until, eventually emerging events with his boots gained his full attention. It is, of course, impossible to know whether the sand would have become the focus of his attention had the story been in English, or how the episode would have evolved had there been no sand in his boots.

The data portraits serve to illustrate the complexity and multidimensionality of children's interest[s] in text, which was evident across the observational data set.

CHILDREN'S INTEREST[S] IN TEXT: DISCUSSION

Responding to the third strand of research sub-questions, the theme of 'interest in text' was generated from analysis of 'affective' relations between child and environment, through which the intensity of the child's involvement was illuminated. Thereby, firstly the depth of children's involvement in different literacy events came to the fore, and secondly patterns in the level of intensity of children's activity was revealed.

This section will firstly discuss how broader theoretical models of interest can be applied to these data to shed light on children's interest in text, and their literacy experience. Secondly, Elijah and Anya's longstanding interests are explored through the study's conceptual lenses to problematise the notion of 'following' children's interests in early childhood curricula.

The theoretical mosaic of interest

Broader theories and models of interest reviewed in chapter 3, collectively form a rich tapestry of this complex concept. Many of those theorisations can be applied to these data and provide valuable insight into children's interest in text in this study, and of their holistic literacy experiences. For instance, Hidi and Renninger's (2006) distinction between situational and individual interest is exemplified in Elijah's attention shifting between his ongoing and established activity with the comic and the multiple situational triggers that captured his attention momentarily. However, these authors' assertion regarding linearity, that is, interest precedes knowledge, which has been challenged by Schmidt and Rotgans (2017), is also contested across this study's data corpus, whereby interest and knowledge can be construed as mutually generating. For example, Anya's activity involving 'letters', exemplified in 'Comics and Catalogues', and other data (e.g. A11, A32, A34, A52) suggests that her developing knowledge of letters, quite plausibly, provoked her desire to engage, and enhanced her interest in letter-based activity, and vice versa. However, as is argued across this thesis, her knowledge and interest are also intertwined with her evolving identities and intentions. The novelty of the unfamiliar language during Złotowłosa, appeared initially to trigger great interest for Elijah, and he made attempts to make sense of the situation, asking Mariana to 'read', and asking about the bear. However, with meaning elusive, Elijah's interest diminished. Hence, interest and knowledge can be thought of not only as mutually constituting but also mutually disbanding.

From the perspective of 'interest orientations', Neitzel et al.'s (2008) model prompts consideration of how Elijah's activity with the comic and stickers could be described as

‘procedurally orientated’, his methodical approach also evident in ‘Dinosaur match’ and reverberated in his mother’s comments. Equally however, as Neitzel et al. (2008; 2017) acknowledge, his activity moved fluidly into being socially or conceptually orientated as his activity flowed in relation with each activity setting.

From a funds of knowledge perspective, (Hedges et al., 2011; Chesworth, 2016) Elijah’s activity can be thought of as grounded in his family cultural practices, comics were a regular feature in his home. However, his activity also exemplifies how young children’s activity, whilst socially and culturally influenced, is not socially determined; he agentively constructed his own participation, defying his sister’s direction. Analysis of Fynn and Amir’s participation in the group read-aloud adds further texture, where different strands of ‘funds of knowledge’ are discernible in the single activity setting. For instance, having attended nursery for six months, both were familiar with the conventions of group read-aloud practices, and both had knowledge of the picture storybook genre, yet their different lived experiences shaped their activity. Although their interest manifested differently, both could be described as sustaining deep engagement with the text throughout the episode. So, whilst in this episode, prior knowledge could be considered prerequisite for fuller social participation, it was not essential for interest.

Dyson’s (2010; 2013) notion of ‘collegial’ interest is notable across the data presented. Returning to Amir’s participation in ‘Dinosaur Match, for example, his overarching intention was perhaps, to be fully involved in the activity setting, and thus he continually shifted his attention from dinosaur identification, possession of a model, and dinosaur matching, as he configured and re-configured understandings of the event and his position in it. In this episode, interest for both Amir and Elijah can be thought of as collaboratively developed, but in quite distinct and personal ways for each of them.

Hence, as Chesworth (2018) also demonstrated, understandings of children’s interest in text alter when differing theorisations are applied. The cultural-historical lens applied in this study, combined with the depth and breadth of data, builds upon and complements the theoretical mosaic.

The personal experience – interest nexus

Part 2 of this chapter reasoned that when children engage in activity with texts, they invested into fluid combinations of meaning-making, identity-making and relationship-making, thus examining ‘what’ children actually do with literacy. By considering interest[s] through this study’s relational lens, this theme seeks to generate insights into why, and in what ways children’s interest in text and literacy evolves.

Interest necessarily involves relations between a person's attention, and a focus or content (Renninger, 2009); to fully unpack this theme, there is a need to see the distinction, yet simultaneously, to unsettle binaries of 'children and foci' and examine the relationship. As debated in part 2, children's relations with text are complex entanglements of intentions, made manifest through a text's materiality, modality and subject matter; thus, the focus of children's attention or interest is not simple. This section aims to disentangle what underpinned Elijah's and Anya's sustained and enduring interest in 'dinosaurs', and 'the alphabet' respectively. This is an important point; as discussed in the review of literature, the current early years curriculum guidance in England (DfE, 2012) makes abundant reference to following children's interests. Therefore, further disentangling what comprises children's 'interests' seems pertinent and turning the analytic lens to the child's affective relations and experience may offer one possible tool to do so.

As Bozhovich (2009) argued, children may strive to re-experience that which has previously been pleasing to them. From this perspective, the experience, in and of itself, could be thought of as a crucial component of a child's interest. At surface level the view that children may strive to relive a pleasing experience, or avoid previously unpleasant situations, may seem straight forward; when an activity engenders a sense of pride, self-worth, or amusement for example, it stands to reason that one might wish to sustain or re-engage in such activity.

However, these data illustrate how children's will to re-engage in activity with text is more convoluted. For example, it was a disagreeable situation that, arguably, prompted Ben to select the familiar 'Bear Hunt' storybook ('Negotiating friendships', B8) . His engrossed book-related discussion with Luke and close examination of the pages showed characteristics of deep-level interest in this familiar text, yet the 'will' to re-engage with this text, arguably, was rooted in how Ben was affected by the dispute. Amir's activity during 'Dinosaur Match' (AM13) suggested a strong interest not just in dinosaurs, but in being socially involved in the dinosaur activity. He continually reconfigured what fuller participation involved (identification of dinosaurs, matching dinosaurs, possession of models) shifting the direction of his attention accordingly. And Fynn's interest in creating and revisiting his 'Me wov Mummy' text (F21), and his interest in discussing and sharing the text involved complex affective relations. The text was of great importance to him, and whatsoever his underlying intent may have been, Fynn's will to re-engage with the text seemed to involve making sense of complex emotions. From this perspective, one's affective relations in the literacy event can be considered inseparable from one's interest in it; across the data set, the focal children were not seeking only agreeable experiences, their relations with texts involved a broad spectrum of affective states.

This study's conceptual space offers an alternative view of children's interests, potentially enriching the established theoretical mosaic. Just as Watkins (2006) suggests that emotion is substantially a product of affect, here I propose that the depth of children's interest can be thought of as a 'product' or manifestation of the intensity of affective relations.

Conceptualizing children's enduring interests

The longitudinal nature of the study (data gathered across 8 months) meant that children's persisting enthusiasm for a particular focus of activity, or 'enduring interests', was discernible, for example in Elijah's dinosaur related activity or Anya's fascination with the alphabet.

Elijah frequently sought out dinosaur-related written and multimodal texts, such as reference books, story books, comics, videos / TV shows, and his 'small world' play often involved creating and re-enacting narratives with model dinosaurs. Oftentimes, his activity involved close examination and identification of models or illustrations and typically he would enlist the help of an adult to read dinosaur names, other relevant information, or the narrative. His dinosaur knowledge impressed people, Elijah was recognised as a dinosaur 'expert', and positioned himself as the expert; thus, dinosaurs were integral to Elijah's identity and social positioning. Through dinosaur texts, he could take up a fuller and more agentive role in the activity setting (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Furthermore, across the data set, it was notable that not only did Elijah pursue dinosaur related activity, but so did others when in his company. It was no co-incidence that I arrived at Elijah's home with a dinosaur themed, rather than a 'train' themed comic for instance, or that Nikita saw the dinosaur textbook as a resource to assess Elijah's language development. So, on the one hand, Elijah's interest in dinosaurs could be viewed as a personal pursuit, however, it was an interest heavily 'nurtured' by significant adults in his life, by his peers and sister, and importantly, by the texts, materials and media available in his environments.

On a similar note, Anya frequently 'noticed' and constructed activity around letters of the alphabet, that she encountered in various contexts, such as in 'comics and catalogues'. A forthcoming data portrait, 'writing letters' presented in part 4, exemplifies Anya's recurrent visits to the nursery 'writing workshop', where she frequently created texts for members of her family. These often included a selection of letters of the alphabet, and other symbols such as 'hearts' and 'Xs' to represent kisses. Anya appeared to place a high value on 'letter' knowledge, and as reported in Anya's story, her key person was impressed by her knowledge of phoneme / grapheme correspondence. It seems likely that Anya's sustained interest in symbolic text making was intertwined with her desire to participate in, what she understood as 'valued' practices and thus, position herself as a legitimate writer in both her home and nursery communities. As literacy was highly valued both in nursery, and in Anya's home her

activity was also heavily nurtured by social others and text / materials available in both environments. Thus, again echoing Dyson (2013), Elijah's and Anya's enduring interests were collaboratively developed and sustained. Given young children's limitations for independently acquiring resources, their interests, at some level will always be sponsored by adults.

From this perspective, children's interests can then be viewed as simultaneously personal, and socially co-constructed. Furthermore, interest in a particular focus cannot be disaggregated from the experiences the focus affords, and nurturing interest can also be thought of as nurturing identity; through their interests, Elijah and Anya configured understandings of themselves.

Thus, in addition to conceptualising interest and knowledge as mutually constituting, these findings echo Rowsell and Pahl (2007), elucidating the inseparability of interest and identity. The final analytic theme further dissects children's identity making through exploring self-configurations, self-expression and self-positioning with, and through texts.

PART 4 - IDENTITIES: SELF-CONFIGURATIONS, SELF-EXPRESSIONS, AND SELF-POSITIONINGS THROUGH TEXT

The findings and discussion presented in part 4 respond to the sub-questions of children's identities in literacy events, to reiterate;

- What is the nature of the literate identities the children enact?
- What is the nature of the social positions made available to the children?

Whilst the theme of identities was a domain of inquiry in itself, identity making was also found to be a key aspect of children's intentions in literacy events, highlighting the interrelationship of the different strands in this study of children's literacy experiences.

The section firstly presents data portraits and analytic commentary of the focal children's participation in four distinct situations. Firstly, 'Sibling authors' (B15b) presents Ben's text production with his siblings at home, exemplifying the complexity of social positioning in the family context, and the impact on Ben's literacy experience. An example of Anya's text making ('Letter' writing, A32) is examined and contrasted with her subsequent recall of the activity, showing how she configured and expressed two distinct positions as a writer. Finally, two brief data portraits, 'Pop culture' (F27) and 'Kawasaki' (B24) illuminate how children's popular culture texts and commercial branding afford identity making.

The discussion section debates how the study's theoretical lens offers texture to previous sociocultural research, offering an alternative perspective through which to view children's evolving literate identities. Through the concept of the personal literacy experience, the section proposes that children configure, express and position themselves both *as readers and writers* and *with texts* in literacy events.

SIBLING AUTHORS: DATA ITEM B15B - OCTOBER

Ben

Context: This data item was recorded during my first fieldwork visit to Ben's home. Prior to filming, Ben and his siblings (Nathan (7), Jake (5) and Alicia (2) noticed my notebook, and on my invitation, began drawing and writing with the 4 pens we found in my bag (B15a). Ben selected my disposable fountain pen, and I explained that he needed to take care because it was sharp. He asked if it was my 'best pen', and I explained that it was my favourite for writing. All four children gathered around me, with the notebook on my lap, however, as this became spatially problematic, I suggested we move to the coffee table. Their mother, Natalie filmed the episode.

0.35



Nathan begins writing a narrative about a mountain biker, which he slowly reads aloud. Simultaneously Ben and Alicia disagree over space as they both draw on one page.

0.23 - BEN – *Me just done {Alicia's} name* [eye pointing to his marks on the page]

0.25 - LUCY – *Oh, yes, I see*

0.25 - BEN – *Yeah, her name* [pointing to Alicia]

0.26 - LUCY - *Ah right, that's {Alicia's} name*

0.28 - BEN – *Yeah*

0.30 - ALICIA - *That not my name, that my Daddy name* [said in a cross tone, while pointing to Ben's marks]

0.34 - BEN - *Yeah, yeah, that's my Dad's name* [looking to Lucy, nodding]

0.36 - NATALIE - [laughs] *Oh {Alicia}*

0.37 - LUCY - *That's dad's name is it?*

0.39 - BEN - *Yeah, my dad's name is {Simon}*

0.42 - LUCY – *I see, so you wrote 's' for {simon}* [looking at Ben, who nods in agreement]

Multiple conversations continue simultaneously about Nathan's narrative, the four pens and about parents and grandparents' names.

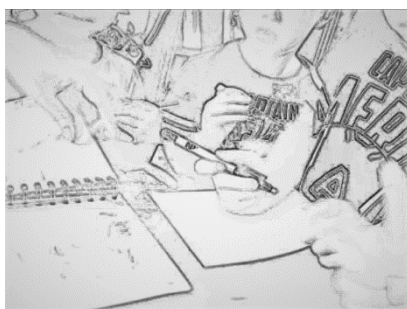
1.11



- 1.11 - BEN - *Can I keep this one, Lucy, can I keep this?* [holds up the fountain pen, looking at Lucy]
 1.16 - LUCY - *Well I need to take that one with me, but I have some more pens I could bring you next time*
 1.21 - ALICIA - *And this one* [holding up her pen to Lucy]
 1.23 - LUCY - *I have lots of pens I can bring you next time.*

Lucy, Nathan and Natalie discuss Nathan's writing while Ben, Alicia and Jake argue over space on the page.

1.48



- 1.44 - BEN - *I can't draw, let me draw* [assertively to Jake, but without discernible anger]
 1.49 - LUCY - *Okay, I have a solution, one moment Nathan, how about this* [removes pages of the notebook for Nathan and Jake, giving the double page to Ben and Alicia] *how about that, does that work?*
 2.08 - JAKE- *Yeah, it makes sense*
 2.11 - NATALIE- [laughs] *Your right {Jake} it makes sense*
 2.20 - BEN - *Look me write my Daddy name*
 2.23 - LUCY - *Oh yeah, you've written {Simon}*

2.17

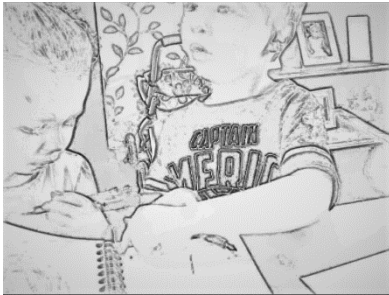


Multiple conversations continue as each child continues their own texts, Ben looks highly involved in his text, then looks up.

- 2.45 - LUCY - *So what are you writing now {Ben?}*
 2.48 - BEN - *Nothing* [looking back at the page]
 2.51 - LUCY - *Oh, I thought that was Daddy's name - is it {Simon?}*
 2.53 - BEN [nods, without looking up]

Lucy gets into a detailed conversation with Nathan and fails to notice / hear Ben's comments

3.08



3.04 - BEN - *Umm, can I rip this one off, I can rip this one off that [pointing to the spiral] We can rip that one off and then we can do it like {Nathan and Jake}, Lucy we can rip*

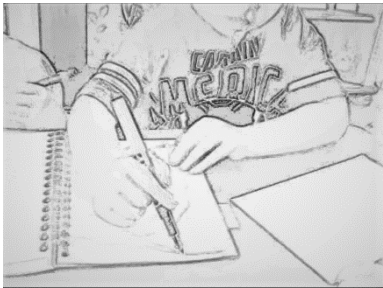
Lucy doesn't respond, so Ben turns his attention back to his text. Multiple interactions continue.

3.55 - JAKE - *Look, I done, I done the writing on my T-Shirt*

4.01 - LUCY - *Oh yes, you have, 'America', well done [with impressed intonation, pointing to Jake's writing]*

4.03 - NATALIE - *well done {Jake}*

4.08



Ben looks at Jake's writing and appears slightly upset or disappointed, he then makes a slightly wavy line at the top of his page from left to right and looks at it for two seconds.

4.07 - NATHAN - *Does that really say America? [pointing to Jake's text]*

4.09 - LUCY - *It does, look he's written America from his T shirt*

4.11 - NATALIE - *Yeah, you can look at {Ben's} and do it, look {Jake} babe, copy {Ben's}, look it says it on {Ben's} t shirt, because his is the same as yours*

4.20 - JAKE - *I'm doing that one now [point's to 'Captain' on Ben's t shirt]*

4.24 - BEN - *Look what me made [to Lucy, pointing to his most recent marks]*

4.27 - LUCY - *Yeah, you did, well done*

4.03



4.21



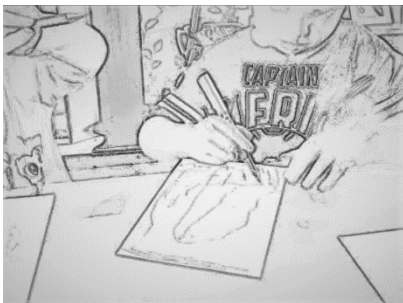
Alicia asks Lucy to take her page out of the notebook, and Ben follows suit. With the page removed Ben seems absorbed in his text for 29 seconds.

5.00 - NATALIE - *What are you drawing {Ben?}*

5.02 - BEN - *Nothing*

5.05 - LUCY - *Ahh, doesn't look like nothing to me*

5.18



5.49



Nathan, Alicia and Jake talk about their texts while Ben's attention is directed to his text

5.20 - BEN - *{Jake} look what me done!*

Jake doesn't respond and both Alicia and Nathan describe what they have drawn / written.

5.25 - NATHAN - *my writing is so nice!*

Ben watches Alicia's activity for 6 seconds

5.32 - BEN - *{Alicia} can't draw, [shakes his head slightly] she can't draw*

5.35 - ALICIA - *Me can* [said crossly]

5.40 - BEN - *Look me can draw {Alicia}*

5.42 - ALICIA - *Yeah and me can*

5.47 - BEN - *Who's is this pen?* [hold's pen up to Lucy]

5.50 - LUCY - *That's mine, that's my favourite pen*

5.55. - NATHAN - *Which one is your second favourite?*

5.58 - LUCY - *Oh, well, probably that one for highlighting and that one for writing* [pointing]

6.10 - BEN - *And which one's this?* [holds up pen]

6.14 - LUCY - *Yeah, that's one of my favourite pens for writing*

6.18 - ALICIA - *Why?*

6.20 - LUCY - *Umm, well, it's just the one I like the best, it's the easiest to write with.*

Ben redirects his attention to his text, after 20 seconds the video unexpectedly stops.

Ben and his siblings were close in age, and according to Natalie, apart from a few disputes over the Xbox, they generally got on well. However, within those good relationships, as implicit in this data, was negotiation and shifting of social positions.

During the filming, I asked Natalie about how frequently this type of writing / drawing activity occurred at home, she replied; *'umm, well this is the first time I've actually seen them write, you know, like this, especially {Jake}, I'm really amazed at {Jake}'* (B15b, 7.39). Hence, on the one hand, this was an unusual situation, influenced by my presence, but also one that evolved quite naturally and spontaneously as my notebook and pen were visible and made available.

During the episode, two of Ben's attempts at writing particularly stand out. Firstly, referring to his wavy line, he confidently announced that he had written his sister's name. However, when she challenged him, he quickly conceded, accepting her assertion that the marks represented their Dad's name. Later in the episode, in response to Jake's writing, Ben appears to make his own attempt at 'Captain America', however, in contrast, he draws no attention to this piece of writing; it seemed quite a private expression of meaning and identity.

Ben also appeared somewhat vexed that Jake had chosen to write 'Captain America'. Natalie had earlier explained that each of the boys had a favourite 'Avengers' character, Ben's being Captain America, Jake's, 'Ironman' and Nathan's was 'Hulk'. Hence, Jake had infringed the 'favourite character' understanding, and his efforts were attracting positive attention.

Throughout the data portrait, Ben's self-positioning as a 'writer' appears changeable, fluctuating between positioning himself as a writer and doubting himself, or possibly doubting whether others would position him as such. On occasions he explicitly drew attention to elements of his text. Yet, when Natalie or I explicitly asked him about his text, he responded each time by saying it was *'nothing'*; possibly apprehensive of being challenged or criticised. Thus, Ben controlled which elements of his text he shared, and when. This data item, alongside others in his data set (B18, B19, B20, B21), suggest that Ben seemed to be developing an understanding that 'legitimate' writing required standard conventions, and therefore the authenticity of his writing could be challenged. In contrast, in the data portrait, 'Me wov Mummy' Fynn seemed to take the view that the message in his text was indisputable. These data echo Levy's (2011) findings that children's perceptions of literacy directly influence their perceptions of self as readers.




Whilst Nathan seemed to be claiming the space of 'expert writer' in the activity setting, confidently and proudly reading his text aloud, Ben sought other mediums through which to position himself. Toward the end of the episode, for example, he commented to me about Alicia's abilities at drawing; in doing so, he seemed to be making a comparison with his own abilities. However, as she again challenged his comment, he looked briefly back at his text before changing the subject and drawing attention to the pen. Possession of the 'best' pen seemed significant to him, and during this, and the preceding episode (B15a) he raised the subject of the pen on three occasions. On the ultimate occasion (5.47), while already knowing the answer, he asked who the pen belonged to, suggesting that the question was not intended to seek this information, but to draw attention to his possession of the 'best' pen, and thus using it to position himself; his request to keep the pen further indicating the value he placed upon it (I would have happily given him the pen, if it weren't for concern it would leak ink on the carpet). Thus, possession of a physical item (in addition to possession of knowledge or skill), appeared to be a medium through which to take up a social position in an activity setting.

The data portrait shows Ben jostling for a social position in the activity setting amongst his siblings and illustrates the dynamic nature of the co-construction of his 'writer' identities. In contrast, the following data portrait and commentary illuminates Anya's more generalised configuration of herself as a writer.

'LETTER' WRITING: DATA ITEM A32 – JANUARY **Anya**

Anya regularly chose to create texts at the nursery's indoor and outdoor 'writing workshops'. Whilst she was able to produce beautifully formed letters on paper, her relatively well-developed knowledge of writing conventions seemed to prevent her from attempting to create linguistic messages. Eleven data items exemplify Anya's writing activities (A25 – A36), this brief data item was selected as she later commented on the episode in the photo mediation activity.

Context: Anya had been at the writing workshop for a while when the video recording commenced. She was writing on an envelope, and seemed focused on her own text creation, although periodically, she looked over at the writing activity of a peer. When she noticed me watching, she immediately came to show me her text.

<p>0.08</p> 	<p>0.25 - LUCY - <i>Is it okay if I film your letter?</i></p> <p>0.27 - ANYA - [nods and holds up her text to the camera]</p> <p>0.30 - LUCY - <i>Tell me about it</i></p> <p>0.34 - ANYA - <i>I don't know</i> [smiles, possibly feeling a bit self-conscious]</p> <p>0.36 - LUCY - <i>What did you write?</i></p>
<p>0.48</p> 	<p>Anya pointing to each letter in turn, identifying each one using a combination of letter names and phonic sounds</p> <p>0.51 - LUCY - <i>Ahh right, so what does that say?</i></p> <p>0.54 - ANYA - <i>I can't read</i></p> <p>0.59 - LUCY - <i>Okay, who's your letter for?</i></p> <p>1.01 - ANYA - <i>For Mum</i></p> <p>1.03 - LUCY - <i>Oh, for Mum</i></p>
<p>1.24</p> 	<p>1.05 - ANYA - <i>I'll show you what's in</i> [carefully opens the envelope]</p> <p>1.20 - LUCY - <i>Ahh, you have lots of things in there</i></p> <p>1.23 - ANYA - <i>Bracelet</i></p> <p>1.25 - LUCY - <i>Oh it's a bracelet</i></p> <p>1.28 - ANYA - <i>And a valentine's day card</i></p> <p>Lucy admired the card and bracelet and then Anya left to put her text in the drawer.</p>

'LETTER' WRITING: ANALYTIC COMMENTARY

Reflecting on my own participation in this activity setting illuminates a divergence between what Anya and I valued in writing; where I sought a linguistic message, for Anya, arguably, producing and being able to identify letters of the alphabet was a valuable skill in itself. Across the data set, her activity involving 'letter identification' is evident in multiple distinct types of literacy events in both her home and nursery setting.

What is notable and exemplified in this data is whilst Anya valued and eagerly demonstrated her letter knowledge, her understanding of the conventions of written text meant that, to some extent, she 'knew what she didn't know', and thus did not consider her letter-based activity as reading or writing. How she experienced, expressed and positioned herself as a writer or reader was not only constructed through relations in particular activity settings, but was also nested in the interplay of her generalised configuration of literacy and how she perceived herself in relation to this.

During the subsequent 'photo mediation' activity (A PH), 38 days later, a 'video-still' image from this data (0.08) was presented to Anya amongst twelve others. Her attention was firstly drawn to photos involving books, and in the evolving conversation she rejected my suggestion that she was 'reading', explaining that she could only read books that she already knew. Her attention and the conversation then shifted to a wall display, which included photos of other children in an adult-led story-writing activity. Returning her attention to the photos, she immediately selected the image of her writing from the data portrait, and then explained that in the photo she was writing a story about the 'Three Bears'; she then elaborated retelling the classic narrative. Here, based on recall of a previous experience, she positioned herself as a competent writer. During the activity, she expressed quite diverse positions, initially maintaining her view that she was yet unable to read, but when inspired by the wall display, she used the image of herself 'writing' to construct a position as a competent story writer. So, across these two distinct contexts, Anya expressed two very different positions, demonstrating the interplay between her generalised subjective configuration of self as writer, and her situationally evolving, 'in the moment' configurations.


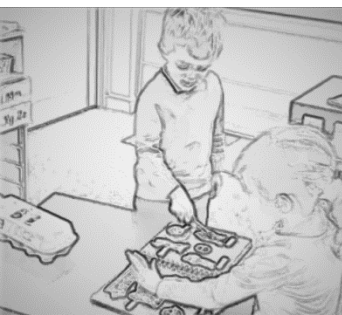

Across the data corpus, popular culture and commercial 'branding' was another tool through which children positioned and expressed themselves, as illustrated in the final two data portraits presented. These data items recorded children's interactions with a home-made 'writing prompts' book kept at the setting's writing workshop. Each page was themed, depicting, for example, Marvel Avengers, Disney Princesses, Peppa Pig, dinosaurs or motorbikes; each page comprised images, commercial logographic print, and the corresponding print in a 'comic sans' font.

The first data item reveals the nexus of popular culture and gender as Fynn self-positioned himself through both affiliating to or alienating himself from particular popular culture.

POP CULTURE: DATA ITEM F27 – OCTOBER

Fynn

Context: Fynn approached another child, Hannah while she was looking through the book of ‘writing prompts’, Nikita was sitting nearby, and the following brief interaction evolved.

<p>1.14</p> 	<p>The interaction began with a mild dispute, with both Fynn and Hannah claiming ‘to like’ Peppa Pig</p> <p>0.14 – FYNN – <i>Me like Peppa</i></p> <p>0.16 – HANNAH – <i>I like Peppa</i> [covering the image with her hand, as if to take ownership]</p> <p>0.17 – FYNN – <i>Me like Peppa</i></p> <p>0.19 – NIKITA - <i>You can both like Peppa</i></p>
<p>0.39</p> 	<p>On the three subsequent pages Fynn points to one of the images, declaring which dinosaur, motorbike, and Ninja Turtle he ‘likes’.</p> <p>Hannah then turns to the Disney princess page and selects three princesses, while Fynn stepped back slightly. Nikita asks;</p> <p>0.57 - NIKITA – <i>What about you {Fynn} which ones do you like?</i></p> <p>Fynn looks away and shakes his head, placing his hands behind his back.</p>
<p>1.07</p> 	<p>The following page contains images from Disney’s ‘Frozen’ and Hannah selects the two female protagonists; again, Fynn holds back. Nikita asks him whether he likes ‘Frozen’ and he points to the two male characters saying;</p> <p>1.12 – FYNN – <i>Me like him and him</i></p> <p>1.14 – NIKITA – <i>And what about Elsa?</i></p> <p>Fynn shakes his head,</p> <p>1.16 – HANNAH – <i>No, I like Elsa</i></p> <p>1.17 – NIKITA – <i>Boys can like Elsa too!</i></p> <p>The next page shows ‘My Little Pony’ characters, and Nikita begins singing the theme tune. Fynn looks self-conscious or embarrassed and leaves the area.</p>

POP CULTURE: ANALYTIC COMMENTARY

The practice of ‘liking’, or ‘loving’ something, also visible in Anya’s activity in ‘Comics and Catalogues’, seemed, like possession, to be another tool for experiencing, expressing and positioning self. This episode exemplifies Gee’s (2000) notion of ‘affinity identity’; through

associating himself with certain characters, but not others, Fynn connected himself with the ideology he perceived the character / item represented, enacting and expressing a certain impression about himself.

Just as Ben perceived that possession of the 'best' pen afforded him a distinct position in the activity setting, Fynn and Hannah seemed to be working to take possession of characters they both 'liked'. This however, nuances the notion of affinity identities, suggesting that the identity positions they both sought here hinged on making themselves distinct, rather than seeking the collective identity often associated with popular culture fandom. On a similar note, in Ben's family there seemed to be a shared understanding about which of the brothers liked particular Avenger's characters; popular culture simultaneously connected them and distinguished them.

It is notable that the means though which Fynn disassociated himself with the Disney Princess and female Frozen characters was by leaning back and placing his hand behind him, rather than through any explicitly expressed dislike. It appeared that he preferred not to comment or interact with these characters at all. However, Nikita's desire to challenge gender stereotyping meant that she directly asked for his views. Fynn, in response looked down and briefly shook his head, seemingly self-conscious, or embarrassed at the idea of being associated with Disney Princesses.

On the Frozen page, however, the images of the male characters enabled him to respond to Nikita's question and express an agreeable identity position. Thus, Fynn seemingly held strongly 'gendered' views of children's popular culture and was arguably, determined to take up what he perceived to be a masculine identity position.

The next data portrait shows how commercial branding also afforded affinity identities.

KAWASAKI: DATA ITEM B24 – SEPTEMBER Ben

Context: This very brief encounter was recorded as a fieldnote. As Ben moved across the classroom with two other children, he noticed the writing prompts book lying open on the motorbikes page. He stopped to look, as his friends continued to another activity.



BEN – *Look, that's Kawasaki* [Pointing at the logographic print. At first his comment was not directed at anyone, but as Lucy moved closer, he made eye contact]

LUCY – *Oh is it*

BEN – *Yeah – that's a dirt bike* [said with an authoritative tone]

LUCY – *Okay, so what's a dirt bike?* [gaze briefly to book, then to Ben]

BEN – [Hesitates a moment] *Them race on the dirt track* [gaze to Lucy]

LUCY – *Can these all race on the dirt track?*

BEN – [looks more closely at each bike] *Nahh – that's for the circuit* [pointing to the Suzuki] *but that* [pointing], *that* [pointing] *and that Kawasaki, them are dirt bikes.*

Ben then continued across the classroom following his friends.

KAWASAKI: ANALYTIC COMMENTARY

During our interview, Ben's mother, Natalie explained that Ben's grandfather, an ex-motorcycle racer, occasionally took Ben and his brothers to watch races, where they were able to go to the 'racer's enclosure', meet the riders and see the motorbikes. Ben's Father, Simon, also had a motorbike which was kept in the back garden. During my second home visit, Ben took me to see the motorbike, a Kawasaki, and Natalie explained that Ben liked to sit on the bike whilst Simon started it up. Hence, motorbikes and motorcycle racing were highly valued in Ben's household.

It appeared to be the 'Kawasaki' logographic print, and its personal significance to Ben, that firstly triggered his interest. My initial question of , *'what's a dirt bike?'* seemed to take him by surprise, possibly puzzled by the idea that someone might not know this, or alternatively, he needed some time to construct an explanation. However, he responded in a confident, authoritative tone, which continued throughout the brief interaction. He fluently used specific vocabulary and through examining the illustrations, distinguished between features of each bike to assess whether or not it raced on the circuit or on the dirt track. Yet, it was only the familiar 'Kawasaki' logo that seemed to hold meaning, other bikes he referred to as, 'that' whilst pointing to the image.

Relations between Ben, me and the text enabled him to express his knowledge and experience the activity setting from an authoritative position, as an expert on the subject. Orientated by the research agenda, my intentions were to explore what the text meant to Ben. Yet, it is worth considering, hypothetically, how Ben might have experienced the situation had I been orientated towards literacy assessment, for example, and had taken the opportunity to question Ben about the initial letter and sound of Kawasaki. The 'space' available to him to express and position himself as the 'expert' would potentially have not existed, exposing how a child's personal and unique experience is still socially co-constructed and culturally shaped. However, the allure of the expert position didn't hold Ben's interest in the activity setting, on seeing his two friends moving on, he re-orientated himself to his friendship group.

These data portraits of diverse activity settings highlight some of the complexity of conceptualising and researching children's literate identities. The discussion section will explore the ways in which the focal children configured, expressed and positioned themselves as readers and writers in different activity settings, but also deliberate on how texts were used by children as identity making tools.

CONFIGURING, EXPRESSING AND POSITIONING SELF THROUGH TEXTS: DISCUSSION

As illustrated in part 2, identity-making was a key aspect of the focal children's intentions in literacy events. These data contribute to previous research demonstrating how young children's self-perceptions as readers and writers are socially co-constructed in cultural literacy practices (Compton Lilly, 2006; Levy, 2011) and how their identities can be understood as 'sedimented' into the texts they produce (Rowse and Pahl, 2007). In this section, I discuss the notion of children's literacy identities as elucidated through this study's theoretical framing, before exploring the distinction, and interrelationship between configurations of self **as** readers or writers, and configurations of self **with** texts. I then reflect upon the ways in which these identities shape children's experiences and participation in literacy.

Making identities in literacy experiences

As illustrated in sociocultural theories, participation in social activity necessarily involves enacting a social position (e.g. Rogoff, 2003; Lave and Wenger, 1991). Whilst these scholars have noted that children themselves are active agents who may negotiate and contest the positions available to them, these theories have primarily focused on illustrating how these positions are socially co-constructed and culturally shaped. Yet, as discussed in Part 1 of this chapter, when participating in social activity, the child experiences him /herself as being 'someone' (Bang, 2008; 2009). Using the notions of a literacy experience, I build upon Bang's conceptualisation, proposing that children's literate identities can be viewed as an entanglement of configuring, expressing and positioning themselves as 'someone', as qualified or substantiated in relations in the activity setting. For example, in 'Siblings Writing', Ben was unable to position himself as a competent writer in relation with Nathen, yet by bringing attention, on three occasions to his possession of the 'best pen', he constructed a unique position for himself. Children's self-expressions and self-positioning seemed to shift between being 'outwardly' or 'inwardly' directed. On some occasions, children appeared to be, either implicitly or explicitly, making a statement about self, (gesturally or verbally) to others. Yet, at other times such expressions seemed to be for themselves, establishing or consolidating personal self-configurations or reconfigurations of identities. In both cases, data presented throughout this thesis illustrate micro-moments of children configuring, expressing and positioning themselves as someone who, for example, authors legitimate texts (or not), someone who knows letters, someone who uses technology, or someone who 'reads' books or comics. These experiences however cannot be separated from their broader configurations,

expressions and positions as someone who is valued, or listened to (or not), someone who listens to others, someone socially connected, or alienated, someone with agency, or someone who conforms, and so forth.

Through a multitude of literacy experiences, children can therefore be viewed as in a continual process of subjectively configuring themselves as literate actors, whilst, in tandem, configuring generalised understandings of literacy. Yet, detailed analysis also highlights a distinction between children's literate identities as readers or writers, and the ways in which they used texts as broader identity making tools.

Experiencing self as a reader and writer

Using the example of children's language development, Flear (2015) states;

'Learning to talk is an example of the relations between the ideal (language of the child's culture) and real form (what is possible for that child at that moment) of a child's development.' (p.30)

Hence, development can be thought of as a journey toward the ideal form of language in a given cultural environment. This notion provides a useful lens through which to consider children's configurations of self as readers and writer, with however, two key caveats. Firstly, acknowledging the plurality of literacies, there are multiple 'ideal' forms of literacy associated with different cultural practices, genres and media (although the same could be argued for oral language). Secondly, it is not the differential between the 'ideal form', and the child's current 'real form' of a literacy per se that is of interest here, but rather each child's *awareness* of the differentials in a particular literacy practice. These data suggest that children's understandings of the conventions of literacy directly influence their self-perceptions as readers and writers in ways that can be both inhibitive and enabling.

As writers

Across the data set Fynn showed little interest in, or understanding of the conventions, or 'ideal' form of writing in the nursery setting. He was aware that writing signified but appeared to have little awareness of the mechanisms through which it signified. Thus, he seemed confident that his letter-shaped marks said, 'me love Mummy'. As the text's author, he assigned meaning to the marks and did not seem to consider that this could be disputed.

Ben, as exemplified in 'Sibling authors' (and other data, B14, B16, B18) appeared to want to create marks to signify, and position himself as a writer. However, when he explicitly assigned meaning to his wavy line, arguably, to express his position as a writer alongside his older

brother, he was quite assertively challenged by his younger sister, and immediately agreed with her that it was his father's name he had written. However, when he later appeared to write 'Captain America', he drew no attention to it, but instead gazed at the mark himself in a more private moment. Ben seemed to be developing some awareness of the need for standard conventions in writing but had little experience or knowledge of them.

Elijah, Amir, and particularly Anya had all developed a greater understanding that writing had an ideal, or correct form. Both Elijah and Amir recognised a selection of letters of the alphabet, by letter name or phonic sound, yet neither had the fine motor control to produce recognisable letters on paper. Multiple data items show both boys requesting adult help to write names or captions, reluctant to attempt to write themselves when encouraged; on two such occasion (E25, E29), Elijah engaged in stubborn 'standoffs' with the practitioner.

Of the focal children, Anya had the most developed knowledge of the conventions of written language. She recognised a wide selection of letters of the alphabet by letter name, phonic sound or both, and she created texts which included well-formed recognisable letters. She independently wrote her own name, and 'mum' on texts, and copied print from the 'writing prompts' book. However, as evidenced in the data portrait, her texts often included a selection of written letters to which she did not assign a linguistic message. On the one hand, Anya seemed very proud of these texts, and seemed to value her letter knowledge, but she didn't view her texts as legitimate writing or consider herself a writer. However, this identity position was highly situated, as described previously, when describing her 'writing' in the photo mediation activity, she described her activity as writing a story, albeit in response to stimuli in the wall display, as discussed. Alternatively, it is plausible that in this situation, with little of her text visible in the photo, she perhaps had some awareness that the story she told could not be disputed, and thus, it was a safe to identity position to express.

These data illuminate the nexus of children's subjective configurations of 'writing' and configurations of self as 'writers'. However, insights into children's identities as readers is more nuanced still.

As readers

Across the observational data set and children's perspectives activities, the focal children described activity with picturebooks as 'reading' yet tended to describe activity with other texts involving print as 'doing', 'playing' or 'looking'. For example, on three occasions Ben described his activity with picturebooks as 'reading a book' (B PE; B FNC), yet he described his activity with a motorbike magazine as 'looking at bikes' (B 23). Similarly, Fynn (F 41) in selecting an icon on the PC commented that he was '*playing that one*' and when exploring a

recipe book in the roleplay area, he was 'looking'. For these children reading appeared to be tightly associated with books, and thus it was in activity with picturebooks that children appeared to enact 'reader' behaviours.

Interestingly, of data recording Ben's volitional activity with books, on each occasion, he selected a familiar book from previous group read-alouds. Possibly, his knowledge of the narrative acted as a resource enabling him to re-engage with the text at a meaningful level, but also to enact reader behaviours, expressing his textual knowledge in dialogue with peers and position himself as a reader; although as illustrated in part 2, he also used this position to exclude a peer. Similarly, during the nursery visit to the library (AM 17d), Amir, who was familiar with the library space, sought out a particular 'Mr Men' book from the shelf then found Nikita suggesting he could read it to her. Through the way he held the book and his gaze scanned the print from left to right, he enacted 'reader' behaviours.

However, it was across Anya's data set that the fluidity of reader identities was most evident. As discussed in 'Anya's story' her identity as a reader was highly contextualised. During her first few weeks in the setting, Anya often chose familiar books with which she could enact the behaviours of a competent reader, seemingly perceiving reading as a valued activity, and wanting her competence to be recognised. On other occasions however, she explicitly expressed and positioned herself as a non-reader, despite, during the photo mediation activity, my attempts to persuade her otherwise. These findings suggest that children's self-configurations, expression and positioning as readers was constrained by what they considered to be valued 'reading' practices but was enabled by familiarity with the text.

Thus, the nexus between children's knowledge of the conventions of written language and their literate identity is a complex one. At surface level, one might assume that the more knowledge a child develops, the more confident they would be and able to enact a more competent literate identity, but these data disrupt this view. It is notable that, of the focal children, Fynn, was the only child without an older sibling, and thus, no peripheral, or third-party exposure to 'school' literacy. Whilst only two data items recorded Fynn creating linguistic messages in texts, Nikita, in our final discussion commented, *'he's always writing, every day he has something to take home'* (F KPIT). Of the focal children, Fynn apparently had the least knowledge of alphabetic literacy, yet was, arguably, most inclined to express himself through text.

So, whilst children in relations with social others and text / materials, constructed distinct affordances for configuring, expressing and positioning themselves *as* readers and writers, their engagement with multiple text types also afforded more expansive identity

constructions. Children used physical texts, and the text's content, to subjectively configure, express and position themselves.

Texts as identity-making tools

As with other cultural artefacts, texts are 'inscribed' not only with meaning, but with cultural identity (Esteban-Guitart and Moll; 2014b), and evident across the data portraits presented are the ways in which children appropriated texts as identity-makers. However, these data suggest that the efficacy of texts for identity making was shaped by an entanglement of factors, such as the extent to which it carries personal meaning in an accessible mode, the nature of relations in the activity setting and the child's subject knowledge (and perceived value of such knowledge).

Elijah's dinosaur knowledge was often a key component of his identities, and with experiential knowledge unavailable, much of his dinosaur identification skills and knowledge stemmed from social interactions around multimodal texts of some sort. However, as illuminated in 'dinosaur match', the combination of text and subject knowledge as an identity maker is enabled or constrained by relations in the activity setting. Analysis of 'dinosaur match' show how the affordances for identity-making were quite distinct for Elijah and Amir despite both expressing impressive subject knowledge.

But whilst Amir seemed to 'work-hard' to position himself more inclusively in the activity setting, Ben's position in 'Kawasaki' as expert on motorcycle racing spontaneously evolved with very little effort. Yet as discussed in the analytic commentary, it was a position that may have evolved quite differently had my own intentions been different. The text was laden with personal meaning for Ben, appealing to his funds of knowledge and funds of identity (Moll et al. 1992; Esteban Guitart and Moll 2014a; 2014b), and thus captured his interest briefly and afforded him an agentive and authoritative position.

Data revealed that texts depicting children's popular culture were highly effective identity-making tools. In the nursery setting, such texts had been strategically used by practitioners in the 'writing prompts' book, arguably, to promote curriculum-based literacy skills. Yet popular culture texts, offered children a distinct position in the nursery environment through reduced adult / child knowledge differentials enabling children to assert more authoritative positions. The findings reflect Gee (2000) insofar that in peer interactions, popular culture texts afforded 'affinity'. For example, Anya (Comics and Catalogues) and Fynn (Pop culture) used declarations of 'I like...' or 'I love....', coupled with associated knowledge of particular characters and narratives to make statements about themselves. Likewise, in the home environment, Ben

expressed his knowledge of video games to position himself in relation to a valued activity in his household. However, whilst Ben used the text of video games cases to construct an affinity identity with his brothers, understandably, his video game knowledge was not visible, talked about, or arguably, even known about in the nursery setting.

It is worth noting that across these data, children's activity with popular culture texts were the only examples in the observational data set that perceptions of gender were discernible, as evident in Fynn's distinct responses to 'Ninja Turtles' and 'Disney Princess' texts. Where previous early childhood literacy research (Compton-Lilly, 2006) tentatively suggested perceptions of gender shaped children's literate identities, this was not apparent in this study. This exemplifies the distinction between children's literate identities **as** readers or writers, and the ways in which they used texts, such as those depicting popular culture as broader identity making tools (in this case, gender identity tools).

In summary, written and multimodal texts were integral to children's everyday lives, their interests and to their evolving identities. This themed has unpacked the ways in which texts contributed to the dynamic relations in literacy events to propose a more detailed and nuanced understanding of children's evolving literate and broader identities, as integral to their literacy experiences.

CHAPTER 7 SUMMARY - CHILDREN'S LITERACY EXPERIENCE: A JUXTAPOSITION OF INTENTIONS, INTEREST AND IDENTITIES WITH TEXTS.

This research was, in part, inspired by the writings of Bozhovich (2009) who stressed that measuring the outputs of a learning environment or activity could only offer insight into what had been learnt; it did not shed light on the learning process or on which aspects of the environment influenced learning. To understand a child's development, Bozhovich (2009) claimed, we must investigate the affective relations between the child and their environments and understand the nature of the child's experience. Accordingly, this study has explored children's literacy experiences and attempted to do so in a way which was informed but not constrained by previous research and established sociocultural views of literacy and literacy learning; my aim was to be open to re-conceptualising young children's engagement with text. Thus, as detailed in part 1, the interrelated concepts of activity settings, *perezhivanie* and subjectivity, with the contribution of new materialist ideas, provided the theoretical structure to conceptualise the notion of a literacy experience. The data portraits exemplify how children's literacy experiences take shape in micro-moments of discord and harmony in the dynamic and affective relations between the child, social others, text / materials and cultural context. Furthermore, epitomising Vygotsky's (1994) theorisation, the data portraits demonstrate that it was not any of the factors in those relations in-and-of-themselves that shaped the child's experience, but rather, how those factors were refracted through each child's unique prism of *perezhivanie*.

Thus, the literacy experience is continually in flux and transcends the spatial and temporal boundaries of the literacy event; it unfolds in the moment yet is rooted in the child's lived history and will potentially shape their future involvement with literacy (and beyond). Like the previous sociocultural research in which this study is founded (Chapter 2) this thesis has demonstrated literacy to be so much more than a cognitive act. Moreover, this study advances sociocultural knowledge of early childhood literacy; it demonstrates literacy to be more than socially constructed events, and more than culturally shaped practices. The experience of literacy is relational, it is affective and each and every encounter is unique and personal. It is in the experience that, as Vygotsky (1998) posited, the social becomes the individual. This conceptualisation of the unique and personal literacy experience is extended and enriched through analysis of children's intentions, identities and interest[s] in literacy events.

As discussed in chapters 4 and 5, it was through iterative engagement with theory, research literature, the pilot study findings and immersive, reflexive data gathering that I constructed the view that children's intentions, identities and affective relations (subsequently interest[s]) were key components of the literacy experience. It is fully acknowledged that another researcher might have configured the literacy experience differently. Nonetheless, it was through this understanding that the specific research sub-questions were constructed, and data were analysed.

In parts 2, 3 and 4 of this chapter, children's intentions, identities and interest[s] in literacy events were disaggregated and addressed separately. However, each aspect necessarily co-exists, and is mutually constituting in a literacy experience, although any aspect may be more or less apparent at any moment.

In Part 2, I argued that children's intentions take shape in ever-evolving relations with social others and the text (i.e. through its materiality, modality and subject matter); children were observed investing in three interrelated pursuits; meaning making, relationship making and identity making. In part 4, children's identity making was further analysed, and conceptualised as a continual process of configuring, expressing, and positioning oneself both *as* a reader and writer, and *with* texts. Children's intentions and identities are therefore intertwined with their desire, or motivation to engage with a text, as argued in part 3. Children's interest[s] in text are construed in this study as a manifestation, or product of the intensity of affective relations evolving between child, text and social others. Children's enduring desire to re-engage with a particular subject matter (motorbikes, dinosaurs, letters, ninja turtles) can then be thought of as a pursuit of the experience afforded when child and text interact, and hence shaping and shaped by their intentions.

This entanglement of intentions, identities and interest[s] is visible in each data portrait, as illustrated in Amir's participation in 'Dinosaur match' in part 1 for example. Noticing the emerging activity between Elijah, Nikita and the dinosaur text and models, Amir altered the course of his activity. His eagerness to be involved in the activity appeared deeper than situational curiosity, arguably he saw potential to configure a desirable identity position through expressing his established knowledge. Yet, when inclusion proved problematic, he quickly orientated himself to gaining a more central position in the activity setting through continually re-configuring what he perceived as valued (dinosaur knowledge or possession of a model) and acting accordingly. Thus, not only did Amir, Elijah and Nikita act in relation to one

another and the text / models, but, as represented in figure 13, Amir's intentions, interest[s] and identities were also interdependent, continually in flux and relational.

FIGURE 13: INTERDEPENDENCE OF INTENTIONS, IDENTITIES AND INTEREST[S]



In proposing this multi-layered understanding of young children's early encounters with literacy, this research also advances what is known about their literate identities and extends the theoretical mosaic of interest. Whilst children's intentions, identities and interest[s] are envisioned here as comprising the literacy experience, reciprocally, the notion of the unique and personal literacy experience adds texture to theorisations of each aspect discretely. The study renders visible the depth and complexity of young children's early encounters with literacy, tendering a fuller understanding of the trajectory of their literacy learning and of children's intrinsic motivation to engage with text.

This intrinsic motivation is evident across the data portraits presented, foregrounding another of Vygotsky's (1994; 1998) key assertions, the unity of emotion and intellect. These data suggest that oftentimes, children's activity was visceral and subconscious, rather than reasoned, as they endeavoured to make meaning, relationships and identities with and through texts.

LITERACY EXPERIENCES: THE UNITY OF THOUGHT AND FEELING

The concepts of *perezhivanie* and subjectivity highlight the inseparability of emotion and intellect (as discussed in chapter 3); Gonzales Rey (2009) referred to subjective senses as ‘cognitive-affective units’, or ‘awareness’s in which thought and feeling are mutually constituting. Similarly, contemporary theorisations of ‘affect’ (Mulcahy, 2012; Massumi, 2015) (also debated in chapter 3), position affect as an ‘intensity’ registering as sensation in the body before being assigned meaning in conscious thought.

This unity of thought and feeling is evident in all 13 data portraits presented in this chapter, each disrupts dichotomous understandings of cognition and emotion.

To illustrate; children’s intentions were, to a greater or lesser extent, discernible in their activity captured in the video data. Yet it seems unlikely, in most instances, that the children were consciously aware of their intent, or could have articulated it, either for themselves or to others. For example, it is doubtful that Anya had thought about why she acted to monopolise the social interaction in Comics and Catalogues (A43), or that Fynn had rationalised why he wanted to show his text to others (Me wov Mummy, F21), both children seemed to spontaneously act intuitively. Likewise, Elijah knew that he liked dinosaurs, but, arguably did not understand his interest at a deeper metacognitive level. And whilst Ben (Sibling Authors, B15b) and Amir (Dinosaur Match, AM13) appeared to experience themselves as ‘someone’ in relation to social others and the text / materials, and acted agentively to position and express themselves in those complex social relations, they appeared to act instinctively, rather than on reasoned understandings. Hence, these data exemplify the cognitive-affective nature of a literacy experience, surfacing its intuitive, or visceral dimensions.

Vygotsky (1978) asserted; “reading and writing must be something that the child needs” (p.117). However, these data suggest that the deep inward feelings, or subjective senses that evoked children’s need or desire to act in a literacy event are deeply profound – they do not simply serve a functional purpose. Children’s need to engage or re-engage with text can be envisioned as driven by a visceral need to make meaning, make relationships and make identities. As such, this study then elucidates that the level of intensity with which a child experiences a concrete literacy event, and how they are affected by their experience is fluid and unpredictable. Each encounter with text potentially reshapes the child’s prism of *perezhivanie*, through which subsequent episodes are perceived, meaning that every encounter with text that is experienced with significant intensity will leave a residue. That residue has an ongoing effect.

Traditionally, in educational discourses the effects of pedagogic interactions in a classroom environment have tended to be thought of in terms of measurable learning outcomes. From sociocultural perspectives, the effects might be viewed as developing a capacity to participate in a cultural practice at a more advanced level. The conceptual space generated in this thesis, positioning the literacy experience as relational, as affective and cognitive and as social and personal, offers another dimension with which to reflect upon the efficacy of the learning environment. Pedagogic interactions potentially leave a residue that shape children's future intentions, interest[s] and identities as users of literacy; they shape the child's configuration of self. As educators we must be mindful of this potential residue and the part we play, both through our interpersonal interactions, and through the texts, materials and resources we sponsor in our learning environments.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

This final chapter begins by summarising the research findings and how they address the study's overarching aim and research questions. I then consider the contributions this doctoral study makes, both theoretically and methodologically, to the field of early childhood literacy. In addition, I reflect upon the study's limitations in both respects. This is followed by a discussion of how current early literacy policies and curricula in England simultaneously advocate and constrain the broad understandings of children's literacy activity presented in this thesis. In unison, and set in the research findings, recommendations for early literacy policies, curricula and practices are proposed. The potential for further research adopting the theoretical framework generated here is considered, before I conclude with some final reflections and comments.

ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research of young children's participation in literacy has tended to examine how children's activity and circumstances enhances or constrains the development of literacy skills. In contrast, this study examined children's evolving feelings, needs and desires and sense of self that develop through engagement with texts, and in doing so has expanded understandings of young children's participation in literacy. Informed by the cultural-historical framework detailed in chapter 3, the overarching research aim was; *'to investigate young children's literacy experiences through juxtaposing their intentions, identities and affective relations in literacy events.'* The specific research questions provided tools to steer analysis in the three domains of inquiry, seeking insight into the 'dynamic relations' by examining aspects of the child's participation and aspects of the social and material environment.

- Intentions
 - What are the child's motivations and intentions for participation?
 - In what ways are expectations for participation explicitly or implicitly apparent in the activity setting?
- Identities
 - What is the nature of the literate identities the child enacts?
 - What is the nature of the social positions made available to the child?

- Affective relations
 - What is the nature of the child's affective engagement in the activity setting?
 - What aspects of the activity setting are affectively influencing the child?

The unity of child and environment was disaggregated in the specific research questions in order to gain a better view of the 'relational whole' through understanding the component parts. Similarly, the domains of intentions, identities and affective relations were firstly examined separately. However, as discussed in the summary of chapter 7, I argue that each domain necessarily co-exists, and is interdependent in the literacy experience. Thus, rather than offering a simple and precise answer to the research aim and each of the specific questions, I have responded by generating a conceptual space to frame children's literacy experiences and have developed four themes which address and concurrently cut across the specific domains of inquiry, as summarised below.

Unique and personal experiences with texts explicated how a literacy event is socially constructed, but personally experienced, demonstrating how multiple participants in the same concrete activity setting have a distinct experience. Dynamic relations between child, social others and the text / materials, as refracted through personal prisms of *perezhivanie*, create transient moments of discord and harmony, each producing subjective senses through which the child configures understandings of the immediate situation, of past and future situations and of self in relation. Thus, each concrete literacy event involves a personal literacy experience.

Making meaning, relationships and identities through text rendered visible the complexity of written and multimodal texts, an aggregate of materiality, modality and subject matter, which in unity, affect the dynamic relations of the literacy event. Texts were found to be multifunctional in children's everyday lives, rather than simply carriers of linguistic messages. Children appropriated texts to make meaning, relationships and identities in their play and everyday situations. Recognising what children were actually invested in when engaged with texts added further texture to understanding their literacy experiences.

Children's interest[s] in text and literacy repositioned interest[s] as a product, or manifestation of affective relations in literacy events. From this perspective, I argue that the foci of children's interests, and the intensity of their motivation to participate in literacy events, may equally serve to construct identity positions and relationships, as to make meaning. Thus, children's interest in texts and literacy can be thought of as motivated by both experience and foci.

Identities: self-configurations, self-expressions, and self-positionings through text offers in-depth analysis of the focal children's identity making. Applying the lens of *perezhivanie* and subjectivity to the analysis of data elucidated that children were in a continual process of configuring, expressing and positioning themselves in the dynamic relations of each concrete literacy event. Analysis revealed how children both subjectively configured themselves as readers and writers and appropriated texts to express and position themselves.

This notion of a literacy experience contributes novel insights to the study of early childhood literacy, providing a lens to re-imagine young children's early encounters with text. Surfacing the entanglement of intentions, identities and interest[s] has revealed the complexity of the personal literacy experience, highlighting the interdependence of each aspect. In doing so, this thesis also contributes to the research literature examining young children's literate identities and adds further texture to the theoretical mosaic of interest.

The findings personify Vygotsky's (1994; 1998) assertion regarding the inseparability of intellect and emotion. Analysis of data rendered visible Anya, Amir, Ben, Elijah and Fynn's intrinsic motivation to engage with text to fulfil their visceral needs and desires. Moreover, these data illustrate just how determined, creative and agentive these children were in appropriating texts for their own pursuits and purposes.

Grounded in these findings, the following sections discuss the study's theoretical and methodological contributions to the field of early childhood literacy, followed by a discussion of the study's recommendations for practice.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

This study is built upon and extends previous sociocultural case studies and ethnographies of young children's literacy practices. Chapter 2 synthesised the extensive and detailed work of Dyson (1997; 1999; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2008; 2013) which epitomises the notion of literacy as social practice in early childhood; in addition, the chapter reviewed research illustrating how very young children socially co-construct understandings of literacy (Levy, 2011), intentionality in text production (Rowe, 2008) and co-construct narratives (Cremin et al. 2018), texts (Daniels, 2018) and interpretations of picturebooks (Wiseman, 2011). This thesis accepted and took as its starting point the notion of social co-construction, in order to explore the unique and personal experiences of young children when engaged in literacy events.

Literature reviewed in chapter 3 suggests that this study of young children's literacy practices is unique in applying the cultural historical lenses of activity settings, *perezhivanie* and

subjectivity, and as such it offers an additional dimension to sociocultural research. The conceptual space generated in this research offers a potential analytic lens to frame young children's literacy experiences. This reading of experience foregrounds '*how*' an activity setting has been subjectively interpreted and 'lived through' by the individual, rather than '*what*' has occurred in a concrete event. The notion of the literacy experience potentially offers an extension to the seminal concepts of literacy practices and events (Barton and Hamilton, 2000). Like Burnett and Merchant (2018), who propose 'literacy-as-event' as a heuristic to study the fluidity and relationality of the concrete literacy event, similarly, the concept of the literacy experience proposes a relational and transient view. In addition, what is rendered visible here is the subjective process of interpreting and generating awarenesses (thoughts and feelings), that are rooted in one's lived history, evolve in the moment and shape future understandings. From this perspective, children's activity in a concrete literacy event is always in relation with the text and materials, and in relation to cultural context, and oftentimes in relation to social others.

This lens extends the view that children become literate through increasingly advanced participation in socially valued practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003). It begins to shed light on how and why different aspects of the social and material environment influence particular children in particular ways, and the ways in which children shape their actions and behaviours in relation to these. Echoing Fler et al. (2017), this study illustrates how children's literacy development can be thought of as socially, culturally and materially shaped, but not determined. As Vygotsky (1998) argued, it is in a *perezhivanie* that the social becomes the individual.

This study, and the concept of the literacy experience has been generated from data that applied a wide-angled lens, documenting children's encounters with a broad range of texts, media and subject matter, and in multiple contexts. There is potential for further research to adopt this conceptual space to investigate more specific aspects and issues of children's participation in literacy practices, in home, school or community spaces. For instance, the lens could be employed to study children's experiences in; shared book reading, structured phonics teaching, the use of digital apps or early authoring, for example. Furthermore, this conceptual space is not limited to researching children's literacies and could be adapted for the study of multiple aspects of children's engagement in cultural or institutional practices.

Chapters 4 and 5 explained the process through which intentions, identities and interest[s] came to be viewed as significant dimensions of the literacy experience; it is fully acknowledged that the literacy experience is not limited to these dimensions, but these were generated for the purposes of the study through processes of engagement with literature and theory,

engagement with a pilot study and through analysis of data. Nonetheless, the research illustrates how children's intentions, identities and interest[s] coexist in a transient state in the literacy experience, and thus contributes texture to previous theorisations of each aspect, as summarised above.

However, there are limitations to the study's theorisations. As aforementioned, the concept of literacy experiences generated here is not a fixed construct, but rather offers a possible lens through which to view. As González Rey and Mitjans Martínez (2017) state;

“Theories are living systems that are in constant movement; when the production of thinking stops, these theories turn into dogma. Theories are not abstract truths; they should continuously enrich researcher's ideas and at the same time to be enriched by these ideas” (p. 202)

Complete understandings of a child's literacy experiences will always be elusive in research. What is reported here is my own subjective configuration of children's experiences in the moments captured in the video data item or fieldnote. There is no doubt that another researcher would have both generated the conceptual space and interpreted the data differently. I offer one possible account of the data gathered and of five children's literacy experiences. However, by making explicit the journey from recording data, through the methods of analysis to the generation of theoretical propositions, my aim has been to make the research process transparent to the reader and to advance understandings of early childhood literacy.

METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION, LIMITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

There are but a few previous case studies (Levy; 2011) that have explored children's literacy practices across both home and early childhood settings. The case study approach facilitated an in-depth exploration of five children's literacy experiences, and, whilst acknowledging my influence on interactions, the ethnographic methods meant that the majority of data was gathered in children's natural environments. My established connections with the nursery school facilitated ethnographic methods, enabling me to take up an 'insider' role. Trusting relationships with practitioners undoubtedly allowed me to get closer to the activity in the nursery environment, although also required a determined effort to be “intellectually poised between familiarity and strangeness” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, P.89) and see past the 'taken for granted'.

Many of the data gathering methods employed in this research were quite typical of case studies and ethnographies. However, the longitudinal nature of the study meant that

throughout the 8 months of fieldwork, there was time to reflect upon methods and innovate with alternative techniques of eliciting children's perspectives. Video stimulated recall and puppet mediated interviews are frequently used techniques and well-documented in research with young children. Arguably, however, photo mediated and object mediated dialogue are techniques which are less well explored and employed. These techniques were found here to engage children in discussion that went beyond description, eliciting some valuable insights. As Woodward (2016) proposes, the objects, or literacy artefacts acted as 'cultural probes'; video data of object mediated dialogues provided opportunity for analysis of children's verbal commentary, and in addition, analysis of the ways in which children handled and interacted with objects proved illuminating. Whilst the resultant data of these activities was considered supplementary data in this research, both these methods show real promise for future research with young children where 'talk-based' data is requisite. In summary, methodologically, this thesis contributes to the field of early childhood literacy through documenting research conducted in multiple contexts, and by exploring some creative methods of gathering data eliciting children's perspectives.

However, the research design also imposed limitations. Whilst the case study approach is defended, data were only gathered in one nursery setting. It is acknowledged that the literacy strand of the EYFS framework (DfE / Early Education, 2012; DfE, 2017) is interpreted and enacted differently in different early childhood settings, therefore the influence of curriculum in relations in any literacy event can only be taken as illustrative of this one nursery setting, not of the EYFS framework.

Secondly, the study design led to a sizable data corpus. On the one hand, this was necessary to provide the 'chain of evidence' (Yin, 2014) required to substantiate findings and facilitate analysis of the dynamics of institutional and cultural influences (Fleer, 2008). However, whilst every data item was reviewed in stage 1 of analysis, subsequent stages were selective; the systems and rationale for selecting data for deeper level analysis have been explained in chapter 5. Yet whilst intensive and detailed coding of just 32 video data items meant that data were analysed in depth, rather than simply described (Guest et al., 2012), it must be acknowledged that potentially salient features in the data may have been overlooked.

Thirdly, another limitation is that all parental interviews involved the focal children's mothers. This was by no means a reflection of my views on parental knowledge of children's and family's literacy practices. Rather, to avoid interviewing parents whilst their children were present, and for convenience, interviews were arranged to coincide with children being brought to or collected from nursery; for each of the participant children, it was typically their

mother who accompanied them. Interviews with both parents, where applicable, may have provided a more holistic account of family literacy practices and children's activities at home.

Finally, the distinct family circumstances of each of the focal children means there is a danger they are viewed as belonging to particular socio-economic or cultural groups, and therefore representative of a sub-group of children. The diversity of participant families, linguistically, culturally, socially and economically has, in my view, enriched the study. However, it has done so without the study imposing any preconceived notion of what constitutes 'quality' early literacy environments or attempting to compare or contrast family's culture or socio-economic status with home literacy practices, or subsequent literacy attainment outcomes. There is no intention, nor is it possible, to claim that the literacy experiences of these five children are generalisable (Thomas, 2011), or are representative of all children, or sub-groups of children. Rather, these unique children's activities with texts provided data upon which to apply the cultural historical theoretical framework and generate conceptual lenses with which to frame young children's literacy experiences.

On reflection, there is much to learn from the process of conducting this research. Ideally, for balance, the data set would have included a greater proportion of data gathered in home environments, however, I was conscious of the time parents were giving freely to participate. During home visits, parents and children always seemed relaxed and happy to chat, however, I was aware that one mother particularly spent significant time 'cleaning' prior to my visits, and I was mindful that I didn't want participation to be bothersome to families. Furthermore, it may have been valuable to engage in more frequent reviews of video data with practitioners; their comments offered insight into their perspectives, in addition to validation and critique of my interpretations. However, practitioners' sizable workloads were evident, and whilst they were very accommodating of the research, I was aware that each request was an imposition on their time.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE, CURRICULUM AND POLICY

The introduction chapter considered how national policy and curricula create pedagogic structures that influence practices in educational settings, which in turn, effect children's understandings of, and participation in literacy (Levy, 2008; 2011). Consequently, previous sociocultural research has called upon policy makers to take more expansive views of literacy that build upon the practices that children bring to educational settings (Daniels, 2013; 2016; Genishi and Dyson, 2009). This thesis echoes and extends these calls. The findings bring new dimensions to sociocultural research, offering an alternative lens to understand children's

participation in literacy, which exemplifies how children's experiences are influenced by pedagogic structures, and equally illustrates how they are shaped by their own personal prism of perezhivanie. Therefore, this thesis is well placed to make recommendations for policy, curriculum and early childhood practice.

Recommendations for policy and curricula

At time of writing, in England revised Early Learning Goals are being evaluated and the Department for Education is proposing to update the EYFS framework (DfE, 2019). Concerns have been raised across the early years sector that these revisions will impose a more formalised curriculum for the under 5s. As Bozhovich (2009) argued, measuring predetermined learning outcomes does not elucidate the learning process, and offers little insight into which aspects of the social and material environment influence learning. In contrast, this study's data revealed, in detail, the complexity of children's encounters with literacy and the multiple purposes for which children appropriate texts. Amir, Anya, Ben, Elijah and Fynn were observed throughout the study engaging with texts critically and creatively. This study then echoes the aforementioned research in demonstrating that linear accounts of children's literacy development, as a set of incremental skills, do not suffice, and reiterates calls for national policy and resultant curricula to present broad accounts of what constitutes literacy, foregrounding the processes and experiences, rather than the learning outcomes. These findings suggest that recognising and valuing the diverse ways in which young children consume and produce written and multimodal texts, may validate and legitimise their endeavours, deepening children's interest and engagement in literacy, and motivating a desire to re-engage.

Currently, children's interactions with multimodal texts are not recognised or valued in the Early Learning Goals (DfE, 2013), yet the practices and provision at the nursery setting under study frequently incorporated such texts. The range of comics and catalogues in the roleplay area and the 'writing prompts book', that featured in the data portraits, 'popular culture' (F27) and 'Kawasaki' (B24), for example enabled children to draw upon their home literacy practices at nursery, and as illustrated, use such texts to make meaning, make relationships and make identities. Yet, these encounters were rarely recorded in children's learning journals and did not inform assessment; the literacies valued in practice and those valued in assessment did not appear to coalesce. The guiding principles for the EYFS, which acknowledge the 'unique child', alongside the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' (DfE, 2012) which describe how children learn through 'playing and exploring', 'active learning' and 'creating and thinking critically', offer a curriculum model in which broad views of literacy and children's literacy experiences

can flourish. Thus, it is not an overhaul of curriculum that is required, but rather a recognition in policy that learning and attainment are not equivalents (Thomson, 2019). I argue for early literacy policy to focus on enriching and extending children's interactions with diverse texts, rather than preparing children for the statutory educational system and for standardised literacy tests that frequently change and that are strongly contested. Through adopting a broader vision in curricula and recognising children's multiple intentions for literacy, practitioners can be supported to build upon, and generate literacy experiences in which children can subjectively configure themselves as legitimate readers and writers, validating their practices and nurturing an intrinsic motivation to engage with literacy.

Recommendations for practice

"In order for teachers to achieve high quality, meaningful education programmes for children, the importance of perezhivanie as a tool of analysis of the sociocultural environment cannot be understated" (Hammer, 2017, p.80).

An important implication for this study is to offer practical guidance to support early childhood teachers, practitioners or students to nurture and enhance children's literacy experiences. The theoretical framework constructed in this research is overly complex, and whilst I argue that it has been necessary to grapple with the depth, nuances and detail in the thesis, the perspective of early childhood literacy generated through this research can be simplified and summarised as follows;

The 3-4-year-old participants in this research encountered a multitude of written and multimodal texts in their play and everyday lives in homes, community spaces and the nursery setting. Children's interest in text, and their motivation to participate in literacy events was in pursuit of three overarching intentions, to make meaning, make relationships and make identities. As children's encounters with literacy cumulated, they constructed understandings of what literacy is, what it does, how it operates and how they might use it. These understandings were always in flux, and subjective, thus, literacy can be conceptualised as culturally shaped, socially co-constructed and personally experienced.

Data in this research rendered visible how children's literacy learning develops in play and everyday encounters with texts. Through providing opportunity, resources and sensitive scaffolding, practitioners can support children to engage with and create multiple types of texts and literacies. Although very little structured literacy teaching was observed during this study, I fully acknowledge that the weight of research evidence suggests that some systematic instruction in phonics is beneficial to children's early literacy learning journeys (Brooks, 2017). However, adopting an idealist view, I propose there is potential to redefine the practitioner

role in literacy education, to one of enriching children's literacy experiences rather than moving children toward achieving pre-determined goals.

Approaching early literacy education from this perspective potentially enables practitioners to observe not only children's literacy skills and knowledge, but also to become aware of *how* children have come to know literacy and *why* they know literacy in a particular way. With this insight, practitioners are better placed to refine their pedagogic approaches and environments for all children.

Therefore, based on the research findings, I make the following key points to support early childhood literacy provision and practice;

Provide meaningful texts and materials: Reiterating previous sociocultural research, (e.g. Marsh, 2003; Levy, 2008; Compton -Lilly, 2006; Genishi and Dyson, 2009) this study further exposes the necessity for early childhood settings to build upon children's out-of-school literacy practices. Texts provide bridges to connect children's home and school lives. Formal learning environments are, too often, disconnected from children's everyday lives. Familiar texts, whether that be picturebooks, popular culture texts or catalogues, for example enable children to make meaning, make relationships and make identities by taking up a fuller and authoritative position in the classroom environment and connect with others; thus familiar texts become classroom resources to stimulate learning. Familiar texts offer a window into children's broader literacy lives, revealing their capabilities and competencies, and bringing balance to the performative literacy assessment which, for many children exposes the literacy skills they lack. Reflecting the findings of Cremin et al. (2014), when practitioners know about individual children's interests and preferences, they are more effective at enriching children's literacy experiences. Furthermore, it is not only the texts children engage with that bridge their home and school lives. The availability of resources, space and time at the nursery enabled Fynn to produce his 'me wov mummy' text (F21), and Anya to create her mother's 'valentine's card' (A32). In both events, authorship of the texts connected home and nursery environments, and both involved making meaning, relationships and identities.

Recognise the personal experience: In the flow of adult-led and child-initiated activity in the early childhood classroom, numerous pedagogic encounters unfold. Practitioners and children share the physical space and resources, yet for each, a unique and personal experience emerges. By acknowledging that a child's experience is not a reflection of one's own, and seeking to understand the activity from the child's perspective, practitioners gain a deeper understanding of the child's intentions for participation. Whilst it is inevitable that there will be misalignments between practitioners' and children's intentions, both moments of discord and harmony offer opportunity. Nevertheless, pedagogic encounters may be enhanced by

practitioners being aware and mindful of what children are actually investing in at any moment and tailoring their pedagogic interactions accordingly. The current arrangements for the assessment of children's development in England creates a tendency for practitioners to focus their observations on the literacy skills and knowledge children exhibit in a pedagogic encounter (Daniels, 2016). Recognising the personal literacy experience may be especially beneficial to observe the literacy learning of children whose participation tends to be marginalised in assessment-based observation, such as those in the early stages of learning English, or non-verbal children, allowing practitioners to understand children's participation in literacy holistically. This approach necessarily involves foregrounding the processes of children's literacy participation as it unfolds and documenting it in its complexity, richness and completeness.

Be mindful of the flow of past, present and future: In every pedagogic interaction, children's participation is shaped by awarenesses and understandings they bring to the event and shaped by dynamic relations in the moment; in each interaction there is potential for children to re-envision themselves as readers or writers, alongside potential to reposition themselves as a member of a community. Recognising the literacy experience involves acknowledging that each encounter with text unfolds in dynamic relations in the moment, yet for each individual, it has a history and it has a future. Granting that a concrete literacy event is situated in a time, place and context, it is also transient, meaning that no single event can be taken as a summative account of a child's learning, or of the child as a reader or writer. As Burnett and Merchant (2018b) argue, "Implicit in the event are multiple potentialities" (p.7). Practitioner observations then, need to consider not only what was learnt, but also reflect more broadly on what an individual child has taken away from this encounter, and also consider the potential impact it may have on children's subsequent engagement. Significant affective moments in a pedagogic interaction leave a residue, thus, practitioners need to be mindful of the part they play in children's literacy experiences, and of the residual effect of the affect. The literacy experience lens foregrounds how children are in a continual process of configuring understandings of literacy, and of themselves as users of literacy; practitioners, alongside other significant adults play a significant part in the process.

FINAL REMARKS

Grounded in my many years of experience as an early years practitioner, my aspiration on commencing this research was to understand the diversity in the ways in which young children used texts and literacy in their play and everyday lives. This thesis has fulfilled that aspiration

and contributes a new dimension to the body of sociocultural research of early childhood literacy. Through analysis of data that spanned children's home and nursery environments, I propose the notion of the 'literacy experience' as a conceptual lens to extend sociocultural understandings of children's early encounters with written and multimodal texts. Exploring the nexus of children's intentions, interest[s] and identities with text has redirected the analytic lens away from the outcomes of literacy learning to the relational, affective, social, material and personal processes involved in literacy; whilst acknowledging that a complete understanding of the literacy experience will always be elusive.

This thesis has illustrated how intrinsically motivated, competent and agentive Amir, Anya, Ben, Elijah and Fynn were in appropriating texts for their own visceral needs, desires and purposes. Their engagement with text was so much more than an educational venture, it was an integral part of their everyday lives. Thus, literacy learning cannot simply be thought of as an incremental accumulation of decoding skills and comprehension. Rather, as evidenced in this thesis, literacy is lived; children's literacy experiences each involve small but significant qualitative, transformative changes in the individual.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CONFIRMATION OF A FAVOURABLE OPINION BY THE OPEN UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC) TO CONDUCT THE PILOT STUDY.

		The Open University
From	Dr Louise Westmarland Chair, The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee	
Email	louise.westmarland@open.ac.uk	
Extension	01908 652462	
To	Lucy Rodriguez-Leon, WELS	
Subject	Developing Literate Identities: The variation in pre-school children's participation in literacy-related activities. Pilot Study.	
		Memorandum
HREC Ref	HREC 2016 2431 Rodriguez Leon	
AMS ref		
Submitted	30/11/16	
Decision date	27/01/17	
<hr/>		
<p>This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for the above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, has been given favourable opinion by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).</p>		
<p>Please note the following:</p>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You are responsible for notifying the HREC immediately of any information received by you, or of which you become aware which would cast doubt on, or alter, any information contained in the original application, or a later amendment which would raise questions about the safety and/or continued conduct of the research.2. It is essential that any proposed amendments to the research are sent to the HREC for review, so they can be recorded and a favourable opinion given prior to the any changes being implemented (except only in cases of emergency when the welfare of the participant or researcher is may be effected).3. You are authorised to present this memorandum to outside bodies such as NHS Research Ethics Committees in support of any application for future research clearance. Also, where there is an external ethics review, a copy of the application and outcome should be sent to the HREC.4. OU research ethics review procedures are fully compliant with the majority of grant awarding bodies and their frameworks for research ethics.5. At the conclusion of your project, by the date stated in your application, you are required to provide the Committee with a final report to reflect how the project has progressed, and importantly whether any ethics issues arose and how they were dealt with. A copy of the final report template can be found on the research ethics website - http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/human-research/human-research-ethics-full-review-process-and-proforma#final-report.		
<p>Kind regards, Dr Louise Westmarland Chair OU HREC http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/</p>		
<p>The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (number RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a</p>		

APPENDIX B: CONFIRMATION OF A FAVOURABLE OPINION BY THE OPEN UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC) TO CONDUCT THE MAIN RESEARCH STUDY.

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

From Dr Louise Westmarland
The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee
Email louise.westmarland@open.ac.uk
Extension (6) 52462
To Lucy Rodriguez-Leon
Project title Co-constructed literate identities: The diversity in pre-school children's participation in cultural literacy practices
HREC ref HREC/2601
AMS ref



Memorandum

Date application submitted: 06/06/2017
Date of HREC response: 08/06/2017

This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for the above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, has been given a favourable opinion by HREC Chair's action.

Please note the following:

1. You are responsible for notifying the HREC immediately of any information received by you, or of which you become aware which would cast doubt on, or alter, any information contained in the original application, or a later amendment which would raise questions about the safety and/or continued conduct of the research.
2. It is essential that any proposed amendments to the research are sent to the HREC for review, so they can be recorded and a favourable opinion given prior to any changes being implemented (except only in cases of emergency when the welfare of the participant or researcher is or may be effected).
3. Please include your HREC reference number in any documents or correspondence, also any publicity seeking participants or advertising your research, so it is clear that it has been reviewed by HREC and adheres to OU ethics review processes.
4. You are authorised to present this memorandum to outside bodies such as NHS Research Ethics Committees in support of any application for future research clearance. Also, where there is an external ethics review, a copy of the application and outcome should be sent to the HREC.
5. OU research ethics review procedures are fully compliant with the majority of grant awarding bodies and where they exist, their frameworks for research ethics.
6. At the conclusion of your project, by the date you have stated in your application, you are required to provide the Committee with a final report to reflect how the project has progressed, and importantly whether any ethics issues arose and how they were dealt with. A copy of the final report template can be found on the research ethics website - http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/human-research/human-research-ethics-full-review-process-and-proforma#final_report.

Best regards

Dr Louise Westmarland
The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee

www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/

January 2017

APPENDIX C: PROJECT INFORMATION LETTER TO NURSERY PRACTITIONERS



Lucy Rodriguez Leon
Postgraduate Research Student
Stuart Hall Building, 3rd Floor
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes MK7 6AA
01908 659151
Lucy.rodriguez-leon@open.ac.uk

Project Title: Co-constructed literate identities: The diversity in pre-school children's participation in cultural literacy practices.

Dear Colleague,

I am carrying out a research study as part of my PhD. Professor Jane Payler at The Open University is supervising the project.

What is the purpose of the study?

The study aims to investigate the relationship between young children's identities as literacy users and their participation in literacy practices in the nursery and home contexts.

What's Involved

To conduct this study, I propose making case studies of six children in the N2 cohort. The study will take place over the 2017-18 academic year when I will spend two weeks of each half-term in the nursery setting. My aim is to gain the broadest possible range of perspectives on these children's literacy-related activities, and therefore I propose collecting data by observation, video recordings and photographs both in the nursery and home settings. In addition, I believe that practitioners hold valuable and detailed insights into the child's literacy-related activities, their interests and preferences for play activities and their levels of self-confidence as literacy users. Therefore, I would like to hold a focus group interview with you and your colleagues on this subject and record the conversation. Also, I would like to invite you to occasionally review some video footage of interactions between you and the child in literacy events to gain your first-hand account of the situation. This study is not an assessment or critique of practice but rather an exploration of how young children use literacy in their play and everyday lives.

Confidentiality

The findings of this study will be presented in my PhD thesis and subsequent articles published in research journals. The findings may also be presented at conferences. All data relating to this study will remain confidential and all participants will be anonymised. Once transcribed, all audio recordings will be deleted and you will not be identified in the transcripts or study report. To begin with video and photos will only be used for research purposes. However, if some of the video relating to the setting is thought to be of interest to other researchers,

academics, or practitioners, I will then show you the recording and you can decide if it can be used.

Please note that if any issue of a 'child protection' nature should arise during the study, the nursery's safeguarding policy will be followed and confidentiality, in this instance, cannot be maintained.

Participation in this project is entirely optional and it is for you alone to decide if you wish to take part. In addition, if you should begin the study and then change your mind, you can withdraw. However, data relating to your participation cannot be removed after the study has been reported in March 2019.

Consent

If you would like more information about the study, I will be at Nursery on _____ and can answer any questions you may have. Alternatively, contact me by email at any time at lucy.rodriguez-leon@open.ac.uk

The project supervisor is
Jane Payler, Professor of Education
Stuart Hall Building, 2nd Floor
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes MK7 6AA
01908 654363
jane.payler@open.ac.uk

If, when you feel fully informed, you are happy to participate in this study, a consent form is available for you to sign.

Kind Regards

Lucy Rodriguez Leon

APPENDIX D: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE FORM FOR NURSERY PRACTITIONERS



Practitioner Consent Form

Co-constructed literate identities: The diversity in pre-school children's participation in cultural literacy practices.

Practitioner's Name _____

Researcher: Lucy Rodriguez Leon lucy.rodriquez-leon@open.ac.uk

Project Supervisor: Professor Jane Payler jane.payler@open.ac.uk

I acknowledge that this project is for the purpose of a PhD research study and the data will be used in a doctoral thesis, publications, and presentations. I have read the project information sheet and have had the chance to ask additional questions. I understand that: -

- Observations, including video recordings and photographs will be taken of the participant children during the nursery session which may include images of me.
- My contribution to the focus group interview will be recorded and used in the study in an anonymised form.
- My reflections and comments on accounts of video footage of nursery practice will be recorded and used in the study in an anonymised form.
- I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason.
- Data relating to my participation cannot be withdrawn after the reporting of the study in March 2019.

If you are happy to participate in this project, please sign below

Signature of Practitioner _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher _____ Date: _____

A copy of this form will be given to the participant and one retained by the researcher.

APPENDIX E: PROJECT INFORMATION LETTER TO PARENTS



Lucy Rodriguez Leon
Postgraduate Research Student
Stuart Hall Building, 3rd Floor
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes MK7 6AA
01908 659151
Lucy.rodriquez-leon@open.ac.uk

Project title: Co-constructed literate identities: The diversity in pre-school children's participation in cultural literacy practices.

Dear Parent,

I am carrying out a research project as part of a PhD study. Professor Jane Payler at The Open University is supervising the project.

What is the purpose of the study?

As you will be aware, young children can often recognise logos on packaging, find websites on 'dropdown' menus and often attempt to write their names and other captions on their pictures. The aim of this study is to find out about children's literacy-related activities at home and nursery and to investigate how children view themselves as literacy users.

Why has my child been invited to take part?

For this study, I am hoping to include six children who will be entering the reception class in September 2018, who show a confident and enthusiastic approach to nursery.

What's involved?

The study will take place between September 2017 and June 2018. I will be spending two weeks of each half-term at nursery. During that time, I will observe your child as they go about their usual daily routine. There are no additional activities or tests. I would also like to visit your child at home once each half term. This would be to observe your child's play and usual activities at home. To help with the observation some video recordings and photos will be taken with your consent. Images of other family members or friends who may also be in the video recordings will not be used for the research.

In addition, as you know your child best of all, I would like to interview you about your child's literacy-related activities, such as using tablets and sharing books. This would be an informal 'chat' but I would like to audio record the conversation. You may also like to explore your child's literacy practices along with me, taking some short videos of your family's literacy-related activities to share and discuss. I will also speak with your child's key person to gain the deepest possible understanding of the activities your child does at nursery and how this helps their literacy learning. The study is not an assessment of your child's literacy level but rather a 'look' at how literacy comes into their play and everyday life.

Is it confidential?

All the data that is collected during the study will be transferred onto an encrypted, password-protected electronic data storage system in accordance with data protection laws.

The findings of this study will be presented in my PhD thesis and subsequent articles published in research journals. The findings may also be presented at conferences. Your child will be given a pseudonym (a pretend name) and will not be able to be identified when the study is reported.

The video data will only be used for research purposes. If some of the video is thought to be of interest to other researchers or practitioners, I will then show you the recording and you can decide if it can be used in my presentations.

If any issue of a 'child protection' nature should arise during the study, the nursery's safeguarding policy will be followed. In this situation, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Can I know the study's findings?

If you would like, we can meet again after the study is complete to discuss the findings. Copies of the photographs and videos of your child, and a brief written summary will be available for you to keep.

Does my child have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you whether you feel comfortable with being a part of this study. Also, if you should begin the study and then change your mind, you can withdraw. However, the anonymous data relating to your child cannot be removed after the study has been reported in March 2019. Your child will also be asked before any video or photos are taken, and if she/he should seem unhappy with the situation at any time, collection of data will end.

What happens now?

If you would like more information about the study, I will be at Nursery on _____ and can answer any questions you may have. Alternatively, contact me by email at any time at lucy.rodriguez-leon@open.ac.uk.

The project supervisor is
Jane Payler, Professor of Education
Stuart Hall Building, 2nd Floor
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes MK7 6AA
01908 654363
jane.payler@open.ac.uk

If you would then like for you and your child to take part, there is a consent form to sign.

APPENDIX F: PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION



Parental Consent Form

Project title: Co-constructed literate identities: The diversity in pre-school children's participation in cultural literacy practices.

Parent's Name _____

Child's Name _____

Researchers: Lucy Rodriguez Leon. Lucy.rodriguez-leon@open.ac.uk

Project Supervisor: Professor Jane Payler jane.payler@open.ac.uk

I acknowledge that this project is for the purpose of a PhD research study. I have read the project information sheet and have had the chance to ask additional questions.

I understand that:

- my child will be observed during the nursery session and that video recordings and photographs will be taken.
- the researcher will visit our family at our home on an agreed date and time, to observe my child and that video recordings and photographs may be taken.
- an interview at an agreed time and place between myself and the researcher will be recorded and then transcribed.
- discussion regarding my child will take place between my child's Key Person and the researcher.
- I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time.
- Data relating to my child cannot be withdrawn after the reporting of the study in March 2019.
- The findings of the study will be reported in a thesis and research publications or presentations; however, I will not be identified.
- Any further use of videos or photos of my child will be firstly agreed with me.

If you are happy for you and your child to participate in this project, please sign

Signature of Parent _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher _____ Date: _____

A copy of this form will be given to the participant and one retained by the researcher.

APPENDIX G: CHILDREN'S PICTORIAL PROJECT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Hi _____,



I'm Lucy, and I would like to find out about the things you like to play at nursery and at home. What do you think about that?

So, sometimes I would like to watch you play, and sometimes play with you at nursery. What do you think?

If you don't want me to watch you play you can say,



Or use 'thumbs down'  Or shake your head

Or tell me to stop



And that's okay  Because **you** can choose!

Sometimes I would like to visit you and your family at home and see your toys.



To help me remember everything, I will sometimes write things down, or film on my camera



Would that be okay?

And sometimes we could watch the videos and you can tell me what you think, but only if you want to.

APPENDIX H: FOCUS GROUP GUIDE DOCUMENT

Researcher discussion prompts

Initial comments

- Welcome and thanks
- Explain audio recording and reiterate anonymisation process
- Affirm that I have seen some wonderful practice and would like to find out a bit more about practitioners' underpinning views and thoughts on the literacy curriculum

Flexible discussion prompts / questions

- How do you approach promoting children's early literacy here at this setting?
 - Planning
 - Resources
 - Who leads?
- Are there discussions or debates around the literacy provision?
- Has children's literacy development been the focus of CPD recently?
- In what ways does the literacy provision and practices here reflect the literacy curriculum in the EYFS?
 - Do you feel the curriculum documentation is helpful?
 - How could it be improved?
- Do you feel you know what sorts of literacy-based activities children experience at home?
 - Is that something you feel you need to know?
 - Do children bring books or other texts to nursery from home?
 - Do you share children's literacy learning with parents?
 - If so, in what ways?

Closing comments

- Is there anything else about the literacy provision and practice here or children's literacy learning that we haven't discussed?
- Thanks

APPENDIX I: INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN'S DATA SETS

ANYA <div>Observational Data</div> <div>Activity Type</div>						Supplementary data
Books – Mandated group session	Books - volitional	Text creation – Volitional	Text Creation - group sessions	Other texts	Technology	Children's perspective activities
A1: V - 19/09 – 03.38 mins – N	A13: V – 19/09 - 05.03 mins - N	A25: V – 20/09 – 00.29 mins – N		A37: V – 22/09 – 00.29 mins – N	A52: V – 12/10 – 1.41 mins - H	A VSD 04/04 FN H (video stimulated dialogue)
A2: V – 21/09 – 06.26 mins - N	A14: V – 20/09 – 5.14 mins – N (Dear Zoo)	A26: V – 22/09 – 1.20 mins – N		A38: V – 28/09 – 2.00 mins – N	A52: FN – 7/11 – iPad roleplay N	A PMI Transcript 26/09 N (puppet mediated interview)
A3: V – 22/09 – 06.46 mins - N	A15: V – 20/09 – 2.57 mins – N (V H Caterpillar)	A27: V – 26/09 – 3.22 mins – N		A39: V – 19/09 – 00.38 mins -- N		A OMD Transcript 27/11 – 12.14 N (object mediated dialogue)
A4: V – 27/09 – 07.10 mins - N	A16: V – 20/09 – 3.54 mins – N (Rabbit Foofoo)	A28: V – 29/09 – 9.25 mins – N		A40: V – 12/10 – 1.23 mins – H		A PE Video – 26/02 – 8.18mins –N (photo mediation)
A5: V – 29/09 – 03.21 mins – N (reader role)	A17: V – 29/09 – 4.21 mins – N (Shak in Park)	A29: V – 01/11 – 3.00 Mins – N		A41: V – 12/10 – 4.29 mins - H		
A6: V + FN 30/10 – 11.51 mins - N	A18: V – 29/09 – 3.10 mins – N (Oh Dear)	A30: V – 02/11 – 14.10 mins – N		A42: V – 30/10 – 9.33 mins – N		Additional supplementary data
A7: V + FN 03/11 – 14.49 mins - N	A19: V – 12/10 – 2.03 mins - H	A31: V – 15/01 – 2,18 mins – N		A43: V – 1/11 – 5.45 mins - N		A FNC - Fieldnote Chronology – 27 entries
A8: V – 15/01 – 05.12 mins - N	A20: V – 02/11 – 13.32 mins – N	A32: V + FN 18/01 – 2.29 mins – N		A44: V – 6/11 – 4.28 mins – N		A PIT - Parent Interview – audio recording and transcript 02/10
A9: V – 21/01 – 02.54 mins – N (reader role)	A21: V – 09/11 – 12.24 mins – N	A33: V – 23/02 – 6.33 mins – N		A45: V – 17/01 – 1.53 mins – N		A KPIT - Key person final interview – audio recording and transcript 19/06
A10: V + FN 22/01 07.20mins - N	A22: V – 15/01 – 10.56 mins – N	A34: V – 23/11 – 01.32 mins - N		A46: V – 21/01 – 1.44 / 6.08 / 9.13 mins - (3 parts) N		A LJ - Nursery Learning Journal File Scan
A11: V – 23/01 – 08.16 mins - N	A23: V + FN 15/01 – 1.55 mins – N	A35: V – 26/02 19.14 mins – N		A 47: V + FN 21/11 – 3.25 mins – N		
A12: V – 23/02 – 21.46 mins – N (extended storying activity)	A24: V – 27/02 – 12.34 mins - N	A36: FN – 25/01 H		A48: V – 20/02 – 6.01 mins - N		
				A49: V – 2/03 – 4.53 mins - N		
				A50: V + FN 04/04 – 17.34 mins – H		
				A51: V – 04/04 – 2.28 mins – H		
Abbreviations – V: Video data – FN: Field note – N: Nursery – H: Home – PMI: Puppet mediated interviews – VSD Video stimulated dialogue – PH: Photo mediation – OMD: Object mediated dialogue – FNC: Field note chronology						

Amir						Supplementary Data
Observational Data						
Activity Settings						
Books – Mandated group session	Books - volitional	Text creation – volitional	Text Creation - Group	Other texts	Technology	Children’s perspective activities
AM1. V – 18/09 – 4.03 mins N	AM9. V – 22/09 – 4.21 Mins - N	AM18. V – 22/09 – 3.46 Mins WW – N	AM24. V – 06/11 – 4.55 mins - N	AM26. V – 12/10 –0.28 mins H	AM43. V – 20/09 – 1.11 Mins – N (smartboard)	AM PMI video and Transcript 27/09 N (puppet mediated interview)
AM2. V – 25/09 – 5.16 Mins - N	AM10. V – 12/10 – 9.11 Mins H	AM19. FN – 22/09 – Name writing - N	AM25. V + FN 12/01 – 10.39 Mins - N	AM27. FN – 02/11 – (name cards) - N	AM44. V – 25/09 – 1.57 mins – N (smartboard)	AM OMD video and Transcript 20/11 – 17.10 mins N (object mediated dialogue)
AM3. V – 30/10 – 10.19 Mins - N	AM11. V – 12/10 –4.02 Mins H	AM20. V – 31/10 – 1.05 mins Name – N		AM28. FN – 03/11 – N (Pumpkin poem)	AM45. V + RN 12/10 –2.53 Mins N (DS)	AM- VSD Video data 14/02 (video stimulated dialogue)
AM4. V – 21/01 – 12.46 mins - N	AM12. V – 01/11 – 2.39 Mins - N	AM21. V – 01/11 – 3.00 mins N (with A)		AM29. V – 8/11 – 5.46 mins - N	AM46. V – 12/10 – 8.11mins –H (elec. Game)	
AM5. V – 23/02 – 12.58 mins - N	AM13. V – 12/01 – 7.18 Mins - H	AM22. V – 15/01 – 9.08 mins (box modelling) – N		AM30. FN – 06/11 – N (letter names)	AM47. V – 03/11 - 3.12 Mins N (smartboard)	Additional supplementary data
AM6. V – 26/02 – 7.47 Mins - N	AM14. FN – 23/01 – N (outdoor WW)	AM23. V – 19/02 – 19.54 mins N		AM31. V – 9 /11 - 9.05 mins - N	AM48. V – 08/11 – 1.58 N (smartboard)	AM- FNC - Fieldnote Chronology – 31 entries
AM7. V – 02.03 – 12.53 Mins - N	AM15. V – 14/02 – 4.45 Mins H			AM32. V – 12/01 – 2.18 mins - N	AM49. V – 14/02 –13.47 mins H	AM- PIT - Parent Interview– audio recording and partial transcript 28/09
	AM16. V – 27/02 – 12.34 Mins – N			AM33. V – 17/01 – 1.23 mins - N		AM- KPIT - Key person final interview – audio recording and transcript 09/05
	AM17. V + FN– 06/03 a – 1.18 mins b – 2.17 Mins c – 0.36 Mins d - 2.04 Mins (4 parts) Library			AM34. V – 18/01 – 9.22 Mins - N		AM- LJ - Nursery Learning Journal File Scan
				AM35. V – 14/02 –8.18 mins H		
				AM36. V – 14/02 6.13 Mins - H		
				AM37. V – 19/02 – 11.20 Mins - N		
				AM38. V – 20/02 – 2.58 mins - N		
				AM39. V – 01/03 – 1.16 Mins - N		
				AM40. V + FN 11/04 – 19.44 mins - H		
				AM41. V + FN 11/04 16.29 mins H		A PE Video – 26/02 – 8.18mins –N (photo mediation)
				AM42. V – 26/02 – 6.21 mins – N (helicopter stories)		

Ben						Supplementary data
Observational Data						
Activity Type						
Books – Mandated group session	Books - volitional	Text creation – Volitional	Text Creation - Group	Other texts	Technology	Children’s perspective activities
B1. V – 26/09 – 2.50 mins – N	B8. V – 22/09 – 5.36 mins – N	B14. V – 21/09 – 2.36 mins - N	B19. V – 06/11 – 06.15 mins – N	B22. V – 30/10 – 2.09 Mins – N	B36. V + FN 23/10 –4.50 mins – H	B-OMD Video / Transcript 19/01 N (object mediated dialogue)
B2. V – 27/09 – 07.24 mins – N	B9. V – 29/09 – 1.28 mins – N	B15. V + FN 23/10 – a.8.06, b.9.05 mins (2 parts) H	B20. V – 12/ 01 – 11.46 mins – N	B23. V -30/10 – 4.29 mins – N		B-PE Video – 01/03 –N (photo mediation)
B3. V – 30/10 – 9.06 Mins – N	B10. V – 08/11 – 5.40 mins – N	B16. V – 08/11 – 2.55 mins - N	B21. V – 18/01 – 7.50 mins - N	B24. FN – 22/09 Kawasaki – N		B-VSD Video data 19/02 (video stimulated dialogue)
B4. V – 16/01 – 8.19 mins – N	B11. V – 19/02 – 19.03 mins – N	B17. V – 20/12 – a. 3.27, b.2.50 mins (2 parts) H		B25. V – 06/11 – 0.49 mins – N		Additional supplementary data
B5. V – 23/01 – 2.00 mins – N	B12. V – 1/03 – 5.06 / 1.06 mins (2 parts) N	B18. V – 23/02 – a.5.59, b.10.23, c.10.59 – (3 parts) N		B26. V – 08/11 – 5.19 mins – N		B PIT - Parent Interview– (audio recording and transcript) 27/09
B6. V – 23/01 – 9.09 mins – N	B13. FN – 19/01 – N (Book from home)			B27. V - 08/11- 4.12 mins – N		B- FNC - Fieldnote Chronology – 29 entries
B7. V – 19/02 – 10.10 mins - N				B28. V – 19/02 – 10.08 mins – N		B - KPIT - Key person final interview – audio recording and transcript 09/05
				B29. V – 19/02 – 1.55 mins – N		B- LJ - Nursery Learning Journal File Scan
				B30. V – 19/02 – 3.31 mins – N		
				B31. V – 21/02 / - 8.49 mins – N		
				B32. V – 26/02 – 8.15 mins – N (helicopter storying)		
				B33. V + FN 23/10 – 2.17 mins - H		
				B34. – FN – helicopter storying		
				B35. V + FN 23/10 – 3.59 mins – H (action figures)		
Abbreviations – V: Video data – FN: Field note – N: Nursery – H: Home – PMI: Puppet mediated interviews – VSD Video stimulated dialogue – PH: Photo mediation – OMD: Object mediated dialogue – FNC: Field note chronology						

Elijah						Supplementary Data
Observational Data						
Activity Type						
Books – Mandated group session	Books - volitional	Text creation – Volitional	Text Creation - Group	Other texts	Technology	Children’s perspective activities
E1. V + RN 22/09 – 3.33 mins – N	E13. V – 27/09 a 2.32 mins b 2.37 mins c 0.38 mins 0.37 mins e 2.33 mins (5 parts) N d	E24. V - 29/09 – 4.42 mins – N	E30. V – 01/03 – 18.20 mins – N (co-authoring group)	E31. V – 28/09 – 1.03 mins – N (name board)	E48. V + FN 11/10 – 1.54 mins – H	E-PMI 28/09 (video) N (puppet mediated interview)
E2. V – 25/09 – 5.20 mins - N		E25. V + FN 12/01 7.13 mins N		N32. FN – 21/09 – timeline symbols - N	E49. V 24/01 - 0.30 mins - H	E-VSD 24/01 (video stimulated dialogue) H
E3. V + FN 26/09 – 3.51 mins - N		E26. V – 15/01 – 4.03 mins – N (name lists)		E33. V – 29/09 – 1.03 mins – N	E50. V - 24/01 – 16.09 mins - H (YouTube)	E-OMD (Video and transcript) 19/01 N (object mediated dialogue)
E4. V – 30/10 – 12.00 mins - N	E14. V – 29/09 – 1.29 mins - N	E27. V – 19/01 – 3.44 mins – N		E34. FN – 01/11 – Name Cards -N	E51. V – 24/01 – – 3.08 mins – H (laptop)	E-PE (Video and transcript) –26/02 (photo mediation) 5.02 mins N
E5. V – 02/11 – 12.07 mins - N	E15. V – 29/09 – 1.54 mins - N	E28. V+FN 22/01– 5.07 mins -N		E35. V – 09/11 – 15.29 mins - N	E52. V – 02/03 – 6.23 mins - N	
E6. V _ RN 18/01 – 13.00 mins - N	E16. V - 02/11 - 9.34mins - N	E29. V – 23/01 – 2.49 mins –N		E36. V – 09/11 – 3.53 mins – N (fireworks poem)		Additional supplementary data
E7. V – 26/03 – 9.28mins – N story discussion	E17. V - RN 12/01 – 7.18 mins - N			E37. V + FN - 13/12 – 3.40 mins - Sainsburys		E-PIT - Parent Interview– (audio recording and transcript) - 28/09 27.00 mins
E8. V – 26/03 – 3.40mins - N	E18. V – 15/01 – 10.37 mins - N			E38. FN – 18/01 – Name board for helper N		E-FNC - Fieldnote Chronology – 35 entries
E9. V – 27/02 – 10.12 mins – N (Read in Polish)	E19. V – 23/01 – 5.14 mins - N			E39. FN – 22/01 – N		E-KPIT - Key person final interview – audio recording and transcript 14/06
E10. V – 27/02 – 7.13 mins – N	E20. V – 26/02 – 7.55 mins - N			E40. V – 23/01 – 9.24 mins – N		E-LJ - Nursery Learning Journal File Scan
E11. V – 02/03 – 5.18 mins –N (+ story vote)	E21. V – 26/02 – 4.07 mins - N			E41. V – 24/01 – 1.39 mins H		
E12. V – 16/03 – 4.41 mins Library	E22. V – 27/02 – 6.02 mins – N			E42. V – 21/02 – 1.47 mins H		
	E23. V – 16/03 – a. 8.28 mins b. 0.59 mins – Library			E43. V – 23/02 – 2.18 mins – N		
				E44. V – 01/03 – 3.32 Mins – N		
				E45. V – 02/03 – 4.27 mins – N		
				E46. V – FN – 06/04 – 36.19 mins – H (dinosaur comic)		
				E47. V – 23/04 – 20.12 mins N (Cooking)		

Fynn					Observational Data		Supplementary data
Activity Type							
Books – Mandated group session	Books - volitional	Text creation – Volitional	Text Creation - group	Other texts	Technology	Children’s perspective activities	
F1. V – 19/09 – 3.21 Mins – N	F12. V – 27/09 – 1.21 mins – N	F17. V + FN 11/10 10.03 mins H	F24. V – 06/11 – 6.15 mins - N	F25. V – 22/09 – 0.28 mins – N	F38. V – 20/09 – 1.17 mins - N	F-PMI (video data and transcript) 28/09 N (puppet mediated interview)	
F2. V – 20/09 – 5.51 Mins - N	F13. V _ FN 11/10 – H 4.23 mins -	F18. V – 16/01 – 5.55 Mins - N		F26. V – 30/10 – 2.09 mins – N	F39. V + FN 25/01 –12.17 mins H laptop	F-PE (video data transcript) 27/02 N (photo mediation) 4.34 mins	
F3. V – 30/10 – 9.06 mins - N	F14. V – 18/01 – 4.11 mins - N	F19. V – 16/01 – 6.36 mins - N		F27. V – 30/10 – 1.49 mins – N	F40. V + FN 25/01 8.54mins H		
F4. V – 06/11 – 5.27 mins - N	F15. V – 06/03 (5 parts) a- 1.09 mins b – 1.18 mins c – 3.54 mins d – 2.17 mins e – 0.55 mins Library	F20. V – 17/01 – 5.55 Mins - N		F28. V – 03/11 – 2.37 mins – N	F41. V – 20/02 – 7.40 mins – H (PC)	Additional supplementary data	
F5. FN – 08/11 N Noah’s Ark		F21. V – 22/01 – (3 parts) a – 1.26 mins b – 1.11 mins c – 0.57 mins N		F29. V – 06/11 – 0.49 mins – N		F- PIT - Parent Interview– audio recording and transcript 28/09 24.20 mins	
F6. V – 15/01 – 5.15 mins - N				F30. V – 08/11 – – 5.19 Mins – N		F-FNC - Fieldnote Chronology – 41 entries	
F7. V – 22/01 – 5.28 Mins - N				F31. V – 19/01 – 2.36 mins – N		F-KPIT - Key person final interview – audio recording and transcript 09/05	
F8. V – 23/01 – 9.09 Mins - N	F16. FN – 27/02 (Story props + Book) N	F22. V – 20/02 – a - 2.49 mins b – 5.57 mins N		F32. V – 19/02 – 1.36 mins – N		F LJ - Nursery Learning Journal File Scan	
F9. V + FN + RN 20/02 – 3.06 Mins - N				F33. V – 20/02 – 2.58 Mins – N			
F10. V – 23/02 – 12.58 mins - N		F23. FN – 22/01 – N (distributing texts made at home)		F34. V – 21/02 – – 9.10 Mins – N			
F11. V – 26/02 – 7.47 mins - N				F35. V - 21/02 – 12.56 mins – N			
				F36. FN – 18/01 – captions for group singing - N			
				F37. V – 26/02 – 6.21 + 2.05 mins – N Helicopter Storying			

APPENDIX J: EXAMPLE OF DOCUMENTATION OF DATA REVIEW IN STAGE ONE OF ANALYSIS

Example from Anya's data set

Data Item	Rating	Activity	Q1 – Intentions - motivation / expectations	Q2 – Identities enacted / positioning	Q3 Affective relations
A29	5	Asked by adult to help peer write his name on his model - first 60 seconds	Initially says she can't but quickly then collects equipment and takes model from peer, sounding out his name, checking with adult	Positioned as more 'able' through invitation – takes up task, but questions' own knowledge - adult prompts and she enacts writer behaviours -	Appears conflicted between self-doubt and self-importance -
A30	3	Overhears adult asking another child to name their picture – A writes own name on hers, then draws adult's attention to it.	Complies with adults request to other child – then takes opportunity to comment / express thoughts on her name writing.	Initiates / sustains relations with one peer through comments about naming texts. Looks to adult for recognition / acknowledgement.	Concerned over dispute between two of her peers in AS – expresses her allegiance to one child. – looks to adult for reaction.
A31	4	Shows adult and adds to previously finished text at WW.	Keen to show adult what she has done, adult on own agenda, questions rather than listens. A keeps text with her – shows to another adult briefly – text seems important to her -	Seeking acknowledgement - possibly fails to get desired response from first adult – tries another.	Invested into interaction, but agency seems constrained – yet very jovial and happy body language / intonation / gesture.
A32	4	WW - letter writing – continuing to add to letter started in the garden that she had kept with her throughout the session – suggesting it's importance to her.	Creates a text – letter for her mum but not content or message – purpose appears to be to write letters rather than to write a message or communicate meaning. Contents include card and bracelet with written text of apparently random letters	Simultaneously positions herself as 'not able to read' letter but demonstrates her knowledge of letters – Possibly influenced by peer in the activity setting who was a passionate 'writer'.	Keen to interact with adult and share her text – invested in interaction rather than into text or activity.
A33	4	WW – making a valentine's card for Mum with peers	Explains her rationale for use of colour to adult. Switches seamlessly between languages to part-take in different interactions with adult and peers.	Confident in own knowledge / interpretation of valentine's cards – sometimes on periphery of interaction between adult and peer – then moves in and out of interaction with other polish child	Appears relaxed – seems content when on periphery of interaction– but proud of her finishes text and discusses it in detail with adult and peers.
A34	3	Poor sound – With peers without adult at WW. Hold's peer's attention on her own text, seems to be explaining what she's doing.	Possibly a desire / intention to demonstrate that she can 'write' letters, and hold central position in AS.	Positions self as legitimate writer in interaction with other child – when adult asks what the text says she comments that it says, 'something sensible' in contrast to other events in which she claims she 'doesn't know'. Possibly peer influence.	Appears to be enacting 'writer' tilts head to side, confident stance – owning space.

A35	3	With peers at WW. Creates text she describes as a 'fairy mask'.	Writes name three times in succession on parts of text. – maybe uses her written name to assert ownership when feeling unsure of other child's intentions – potentially volitional participation afforded by setting's practices but constrained by peer.	Uses confident body language – self positioning as legitimate writer. Negotiation with peer over glue – asserting herself Elicits adult attention – for recognition rather than for support – adult reading her writing positions her as legitimate writer	Maintains high levels of involvement – interest – volitional – using own initiative Power relationship with peer Mostly content / relaxed
A36	4	Field note documenting AS and interaction at home visit – no video as inappropriate in situation. Data item supplements data set showing parents positioning A as less able than brother.	Takes up 'centre stage' role – on seeing herself writing on video – gets paper and pen the enacts her perception of legitimate writer – confident pose – flicking hand when writing letters	Centre of attention of all adults and, at times, of older brother – Parents initiated conversation with LRL – positioning A as a non-reader – A possibly is countering with her actions, but unclear whether deliberately or not.	Conflicting positioning in AS– simultaneously valued and positioned as less able. Yet appears to take a subtly assertive stance???
A37	1	Days of week board – Key Group morning routine – very short	Little space for participation or positioning	Sits and joins in reciting days of week in chorus with group.	Seems unenthusiastic but accepting of daily routine
A38	3	Very adult controlled AS – early in school year, still unsure.	Figuring how to participate – intention to participate as group member – to get it right. – being socialised into nursery ways participating	Trying to be the 'good' child – very little space to express existing knowledge	Unsure – figuring how to be accepted. Attention in AS and interaction.
A39	3	WW – expresses knowledge relating to page in interests book - video ends prematurely – very short	Uses text (interests book) – to express her knowledge on subject	Adult claims no knowledge of the subject and asks for and values A's knowledge	Uses text to connect with LR – also investing into text – connecting with previous experiences and what she knows.

Example from Elijah's data set

Data item	Rating	Activity Setting	Q1 – Intentions - motivation / expectations	Q2 – Identities enacted / positioning	Q3 Affective relations
E1	3	Group read-aloud – Familiar book - Previous knowledge of text adding to anticipation / facilitating participation	Highly engaged, keen to participate – seems to anticipate adult's pauses in reading to contribute / join in.	Contributions acknowledged – recall of events / narrative positively received by teacher.	Excited – highly engaged – anticipation (raised posture, smiling, gaze directly to book and reader)
E2	4	Early in school year – story session with props – E struggles to follow instructions to wait, wants to handle props himself and keeps trying to take items.	Very interested – has no preconceived idea about how he should participate and wants to explore everything – doesn't perceive adult's intentions or those of peers. Perceives response is required – so offers comments quite randomly.	See interaction as being between himself, adult and resources – less aware of peers. Needs physical contact – and connectedness – seeking acknowledgement ???	Highly interested – need for physical contacts with adult – leans onto her.

E3	2	Repeat of 'Rat a Tat Tat' social skills game adapted from storybook - no engagement with text itself	Seems to perceive adult's dialogue with whole group was personal interaction with him. Engaged in dialogue as such – not accustomed to being one of a group.	Positioning himself at centre of AS – close physical contact with adult.	Highly involved, very excited, enthusiasm.
E4	3	Group read-aloud - Engrossed in narrative rather than AS	Doesn't take up few invitations to 'join in', and participate actively – but gaze directed to book, as if lost in thought.	Peripheral participation in AS – no attempt to take up more active or central position – (not typical for E)	Facial expression suggests empathy with characters in book – attention – interest towards book rather than storyteller – Invested in narrative more than AS
E5	3	Teacher read-aloud of 'Smartest Giant' Example of limited space to participate / or enact identity – highly teacher controlled.	Relatively still and quiet participation – Participation through imitation of adult's action Not seeking connection as usual -	Little attempt to express identity / little space made available – aligned intentions??	Physically uncomfortable – unable to sit still – levels of interest / engagement seem to fluctuate.
E6	5	Group SBR with substitute teacher – possibly unsettling E – who seem to be 'figuring out' situation.	Seems to want to be central in AS but positioned on periphery – but keeps working to be at centre and renegotiates rules Responds to adult request when reinforced. Makes several requests to feel book (raised illustrations)	Participates in group practices but also takes non-conformist – more agentive position. Works to be acknowledged – sees himself as key participant in group Relates text to previous reading – briefly acknowledged by adult	Highly involved Enthusiastic to participate and be central in AS Constantly moving
E7	3	Group looking at range of books to each chose favourite - teacher led.	Attention focused onto dinosaur book – announces it is favourite – given space to express his preference, but not to explore the book -	Takes his turn then complies with group practices, waiting and maintaining interest while peers take a turn. – positioned as and enacts – group member	Expresses and explains his preference for book – validated when peer then chooses same book as her favourite – Deeply engaged, but assertive
E8	4	Group SBR – relating to snow – example of very compliant participation – no attempt to assert agency	Participation only invited once – expectation of quiet engagement – No attempt from E to participate differently – gaze remained on text – appeared involved in text	Group member – complying with expectations -	Quiet – engaged participation – distracted and irritated by cracked skin on lip, which he keeps feeling with finger tips.
E9	5	Group SBR – familiar text (3 Bears) but read in polish -	Adult introduces vocab – Ethan seems enthusiastic – seems to be trying figure out what is happening – then protests – no space given – moves to own alternative agenda – mis-aligned intentions	See himself as central to AS and cannot understand why needs are not being met – cannot participate as he expects so does his own thing.	Looking for inclusion – acknowledgement – connection – not available Distracted, or attracted by sand in his boots.
E10	3	Poor quality video – SBR quiet engagement.	Appears engrossed in narrative and text – participating as expected in situation – appears to participate because that's what he perceives he should do.	No distinguishable enactment of identity – quiet focused engagement.	Focus on content - invested into narrative.

Example from Fynn's data set

Data Item	Rating	Activity	Q1 – Intentions - motivation / expectations	Q2 – Identities enacted / positioning	Q3 Affective relations
F34	3	Poor quality video in places. Looking at Avenger's comic in Nursery roleplay area. Another social interaction, unfolds nearby, but F doesn't try to get involved. Seems focused on comic, but very aware of adjacent interaction.	Interested to explore comic – subject of personal interest – wants some support but following social practices doesn't interrupt continues independently. Becomes involved in other comic to get into the social interaction, possibly.	Has knowledge and interest on subject but unable to use it to assert a social position. When opportunity arises, uses text to expresses his knowledge of Spiderman. Adult acknowledges and values his contribution.	Contentends with other child monopolising adult's attention. Involved in comic but on periphery / not included in social interaction.
F35	5	'Favourite story vote' in group session– required to select favourite book from restricted choice.	Children's participation highly adult controlled – following prompts and taking cues from other children selects name card to copy in order to complete task. Attempt at more agentive / divergent text creation is rejected by adult.	Position available dependent on extent to which he completes required task – space for participation and identity highly controlled.	Pressure to 'get it right' - and participate in required manner – body language suggests resigned to situation.
F36	3	Field note -lacks detail of whole AS – supplementary data	Example of participation being invited and taken up - adult control of who gets to participate actively – enact identity and relate actively with AS.	Demo of knowledge – enabling enactment of 'able' position.	Values special position that invitation to participate offered –
F37 a & b	5	Helicopter storytelling – F's first experience of Helicopter stories. Part A – F participates as member of the audience. Part B – in an impromptu session, F tells his story to the teachers and then enacts it.	On the periphery but interested – immediately offered to play a part when suggested but not acknowledged and not selected. Part b – offered full, central position – tells story drawing on out of school knowledge re. Spiderman	Part a – dealing with disappointment – Part b – expert knowledge on Spiderman – drawing on pop culture interests - offered and takes up central position.	Part a, Rejection – not selected – disappointment – unacknowledged / unsuccessful attempts at taking a central position Part b – acknowledged – valued contribution – F's action / affect in relation to unfolding events in AS
F38	2	On PC - using touch screen to select costumes for characters – very limited transaction with written text / icon	Wants peers to acknowledge but doesn't then want peer to interfere – needed negotiating and balancing.		Balancing desire for social interaction / connection with desire for autonomy of activity.
F39	3	At home, re-engages with a text made at nursery– a map made - whilst watching video of himself making the map. Explains map to me.	Explains map – excitedly then turns attention to laptop – explores tentatively – watches some video then returns to exploring the keyboard	His map valued – F placed at centre of AS (unusual not to have twins there) gains parent's and LRLs attention for a while. Mother warns to be careful. Parent talks about him in positive light – demonstrating to LRL how clever he is.	Excited to be explaining his map, which is being valued. Exploration of keyboard suppressed by requirement that he is careful.
F40	4	With tablet at home – connects to his interest in maps.	Not interested in adults attempts at interaction distracting him from the activity – but responds passively at first becoming more animated.	Independent – capable of using technology – demonstrating his skill - selecting games	Invested in technology – distracted by adult evolving into more social interaction / dialogue.

			Interprets multimodal text on screen. As activity progresses, F becomes more interested in interaction with me.	When struggling with tech – parent intervenes to make it work.	Very pleased at 'winning', which he expresses.
F41	5	PC at Nursery - seeks my help to start up PC and enter password	Needs / seeks and accepts help to enter password to access. when supported accesses independently and absorbed in activity. Very tolerant of peer	Demonstrates some knowledge of password / keyboard, pointing to letters and questioning adult. Adult supports using hand over hand – positioning F as 'in need' – which F accepts. – although usually he accesses PC independently using trial and error approach. Need for password constraining.	Happy with outcome of support offered. Invests into social interaction when needing support and invests into activity when able. Uses adult to achieve outcome. Not adversely affected by overpowering peer. Satisfied when achieving outcome.

APPENDIX K: CODEBOOK

Coding Domain 1 – Intentions for Participation

Codes generated in relation to sub-question 1a - Child's motivations and intentions for participation			
Sub-domain	Code	Code definition (and discernible indicators)	Example
P1	Materials / object directed activity	Actions and behaviours intended to explore affordances of materials or text.	E27 – Elijah tried different ways of opening clasp on a clipboard to place pieces of paper in to make a 'map' whilst moving around the environment.
P1	Observes	Stays on periphery of AS observing what is happening – possibly planning course of action.	AM13 – Amir sat near to Elijah and Nikita as they discussed illustrations in book, his gaze directed to book.
P1	Seeks help	Actions or behaviours intended to seek or elicit adult / peer support to complete a task, achieve goal, access text, or develop understanding. (Verbal / gestural request – holds materials to adult – points to issue)	F41 – Password required to access PC. Fynn noticed adult, made eye contact, used an 'concerned' facial expression whilst pointing to the screen and then to keyboard.
P1	Knowledge expression initiated	Spontaneous actions or behaviours intended to express own knowledge or thoughts on issue, text or situation	AM23 – Amir made eye contact with adult, pointed to a character in the 'writing prompts book' and said "that's chase, he has the police car".
P1	Knowledge expression response	Actions or behaviours in response to questioning, or other's comments and actions, intended to express own knowledge or thoughts on text, issue, situation.	F9- Fynn responded to peer question about 'Toy Story book' he explained, "he is the bad boy breaking the toys".
P1	Offers support / advice	Actions or behaviours intended to offer help, support to others to complete task, understand text or to advise on course of action.	A10 – Anya spontaneously leant over to Polish speaking friend in group and translates part of story from practitioner's read-aloud.
P1	Seeks social connection	Actions and behaviours intended to primarily to seek or maintain social connection / relationship. (Gaze predominantly to people rather than activity – initiates interaction (verbally or gesturally)	B8 – Whilst sharing picture book, Ben made eye contact with a peer, nodded, and verbally affirmed peer's comments.
P1	Seeks inclusion	Actions and behaviours intended to enable inclusion in the activities of others. (Verbal / gestural request – physically positions self in proximity – engages in / imitates actions of participants / draws attention to self)	AM9 – Amir walked around edge a group of children and adult reading the 'Bear Hunt' story, he stood on the outskirts, joining in the actions of the group.
P1	Seeks affection	Actions and behaviours intended to elicit affection or emotional support from adult.	E23 – When sitting with group at Library for a story time, Elijah got up, and moved to sit close to the student teacher, resting his head against him.
P1	Entertaining	Actions and behaviours intended to entertain / elicit amusement in others. (Draws attention of others before acting – eye contact – smiling)	A43 – Anya pretended to be sleeping with a comic over her face, 'snoring' loudly, then 'popped up' to surprise Lucy.
P1	Self-positioning	Actions or behaviours with primary intention of self-position – (detailed coding under Identity codes codes)	A52 – After following instruction on Vtech to find letter 'w', Anya said "oh that's too easy".

P1	Positioning others	Actions and behaviours with primary intention of positioning others (coded in detail under 'I' codes)	B15b – Ben looked at his sister's text and announced to Lucy that she couldn't draw.
P1	Solidarity	Actions or behaviours intended to show allegiance or membership to social group. (Agreement – reiterates or affirms statements – nods)	B20 – During group writing session, Ben called to friend across the group saying "look we both got blue ain't we" while holding up pen, maintaining eye contact and nodding.
P1	Seeks acknowledgement	Actions and behaviours intended to seek from others acknowledgement or validation of own accomplishments, knowledge or position. (Demonstrates skill / knowledge – uses self-affirming comments (I can, I have, my...) and expects response - uses questioning intonation when suggesting)	A28- After copying 'Skye' from example onto own text, Anya pointed to each letter in turn, identifying it by phonic sound, she then made eye contact with adult, smiled and pointed again to her writing.
P1	Fulfils request	Actions or behaviours with primary intention of fulfilling or complying with request of adults, peers or siblings.	B20 – Ben watched Nikita write the letter D on the white board, when she asked him to have a try at copying it, he picked up his pen and attempted to copy the letter shape.
P1	Discards Materials / Text	Materials / text are discarded as no longer serving purpose or meeting current / changed intentions.	AM31 – Amir sat in a cardboard box, a peer passed him a board book, he looked at the front cover then threw it over the side of the box.
P1	Possession	Takes possession of materials, text or object for purpose of 'just having', and / or to connect with event. (Keeps hold of object that appears to be serving no practical purpose)	B18 – Ben collected up all the pens on the WW table, holding them in a bundle, he remained there for 4 minutes.
P1	Avoidance	Actions intended to avoid part-taking in activity or interaction	F35 – Fynn folded his arms and dropped his head down avoiding eye contact with adult, refusing to pick up the pen as requested.

Codes generated in relation to sub-question 1b - Expectations for participation explicit or implicit in the activity setting			
Sub-domain	Code	Code definition (and discernible indicators)	Example
P2	Adult direction / suggestion	Adult directs or suggests, verbally or with gesture, how child should participate, what they should do, or how to proceed in activity setting.	E42 – When Elijah tried to prevent another child looking at the comic, the practitioner said "Elijah, you move over, and then he can see too, you need to share"
P2	Adult intentional modelling	Adult intentionally models, through own actions and behaviours, how to participate in activity or complete task.	B26 – Group poetry session, Practitioner began tapping her knees in the rhythm of the poem and used facial expression to encourage Ben (and group) to do same.
P2	Adult unintentional modelling	Adults actions or behaviours provide model of ways of participating in activity which are noticed and taken up by child. (Within current AS)	AM31- As Lucy browsed through a catalogue in the roleplay area, she licked her index finger each time to turn the page, Amir adopted the same action in browsing a comic.
P2	Adult invitation	Adult verbally or gesturally invites child into activity or to take up fuller position in activity setting.	AM9 – When Nikita noticed Amir waiting on periphery of a group activity, she made a space for him, gave eye contact and tapped the floor saying quietly "you can sit here".

P2	Adult questioning	Adult asks questions (or make suggestions posed as Qs) which position the child's participation or suggest alternative possibilities.	F9 - When Fynn shared his Toy Story book with the group at nursery, Nikita asked "what happens? you tell us the story".
P2	Adult response positive	Adult reacts to, or discreetly acknowledges the child's participation positively; acknowledges or praises child, their actions, their capabilities or expresses thoughts / comment (conveying expectations)	A19 – Anya read aloud a short picture book in Polish, her mother responded "yes, perfect".
P2	Adult response negative	Adult responds to child's participation negatively; expresses disapproval or reprimands child, their actions or behaviours / their capabilities or their expresses thoughts or comments. (Conveying expectations)	E27 – When Elijah asked Lucy to write his name she responded, "not until we put all these lids back on the pens, why have we got so many lids off?".
P2	Peer / sibling suggestion or direction	Peer or sibling directs or suggests, verbally or with gesture, how child should participate, what they should do, or how to proceed in activity setting.	AM40 – Amir's sister guided him through tracing letters, she said "look, do it like this".
P2	Peer / sibling modelling	Peer / sibling models, through own actions, (intentionally or unintentionally) possibilities for participation in activity.	B15b – Ben's brother wrote 'Captain America' which prompted Ben to make letter type shapes on his page.
P2	Peer / sibling invitation	Peer or sibling verbally or gesturally invites child into activity or to take up position in activity setting.	F27 – Peer tapped Fynn to gain his attention, pointing to an illustration of Peppa Pig, he called to him, "look, look Peppa Pig".
P2	Peer / sibling questioning	Peer or sibling asks questions which position the child's participation or suggest alternative possibilities. ("can you do..." – "have you got...")	A35 - Whilst creating texts at nursery, a peer asked Anya, "can you do hearts Anya?" whilst making beautifully formed hearts herself.
P2	Resource presentation	Resources or materials are presented in a way that indicates how they should be used and for what purpose.	A28 – The layout of nursery's Writing workshop included the writing prompts book, paper, pens, pencils and examples of children's writing, which prompted Anya to copy the character names from the Peppa Pig page onto her own text.
P2	Routine activity – nursery / home	Activity is strongly routine based, and actions and behaviours strongly influenced by practice norms.	F21a – Before putting his text in the drawer, Fynn returned to the table and makes some marks in the top right-hand corner of his paper to represent his name.
P2	Encouraged participation	Involvement in activity is volitional but has been encouraged / recommended by adult or peer	A19 – At Anya's home, Lucy looked at Anya's books in Polish and said, "I don't know these stories, can someone read it to me?".
P2	Environmental / material enablers	Materials or environmental factors are significant in enabling realisation of child's intentions.	E46 – Stickers in dinosaur comic enabled Elijah to complete the activities and demonstrate his dinosaur knowledge.
P2	Environmental / material constraints	Materials or environmental factors are significant in constraining the realisation of child's intentions.	F41 – Fynn was unable to self-select preferred games on PC, due to need for password and thus, awaited the help of a passing adult.
P2	Text / materially initiated interest	Objects, text or materials, or happenings in AS catches child's interest, intrigue, or curiosity. (Child stops current course of action in response to stimuli in AS)	B24 – Images of Kawasaki motorbike and logographic print caught Ben's attention as he moved across the classroom.

Codes generated during Stage 3 of analysis - text or material's influence in relation when children as consumers, and / or producers of text.			
Child as text consumer			
Sub-domain	Code	Code definition (and discernible indicators)	Example
P3	Familiarity - Links experiences	Text is familiar, prompts recall of previous experiences. Text or interpretable subject of text is known to child, leading to a sense of confidence.	F9 – Images from familiar 'Toy Story' movie in the book enabled Fynn to tell the story to his peers.
P3	Provokes curiosity	Acts as situational trigger for interest / intrigue	E42 – Whilst browsing comic, Elijah interrupted the adult saying "oh, oh look, wait, look that" then turned back to front cover seeking link.
P3	Provokes expression meaning	Triggers the expression, verbally or gesturally, of the meaning being interpreted from the text.	AM4 – illustration provoked Amir to explain the character's motive in an 'Iggie Piggie' book, he said "no not there because that is too dirty".
P3	Holds interest	Holds child's initial curiosity throughout interactive turn, maintaining child's sustained engagement.	B26 – Firework poem's magnetic prop held Ben's gaze throughout the adult's reciting of the poem until he could place it on the poem board.
P3	Conflicts with previous experiences	Text does not match / conflicts with existing experience or expectations.	E9 – Familiar props and illustrations for goldilocks story misaligned with Elijah's expectations when story was read in Polish.
P3	Provokes questions	Causes child to question meaning – either asked verbally or discernible through child's expressions / body language	A15 – Anya pointed to the print in the book and asked, "what does that say?"
P3	Provokes detailed examination	Causes child to pick up text, explore the materiality physically, as well as visually and cognitively, to examine in more detail.	A10- Anya leant in close to the 'Very Busy Spider' book, examining the raised illustration of the web, feeling it with her index finger.
P3	Fails to hold interest	Child loses interest in text – prior to book, game or app's obvious completion point – or purpose for text interpretation fulfilled.	B8 – When a peer returned a book and left the book area, Ben immediately discarded his book and took his peer's book.
P3	Elicits alphabetical knowledge	Text mediates, through accessible layout, children's use of letters / sounds to make meaning / make relationships	AM4 – Looking at a book cover prior to group read-aloud, Amir noticed and explained that the book title and his name had the same initial letter.
P3	Provides example	Child uses text as an example to copy or for ideas to create own text.	A28 – Anya used print in a book to copy onto her own text.
P3	Mediates interaction / conversation	Text is central to social interaction / conversation.	A43- Illustrations in comic became the focal point of dialogue between Anya and Lucy.
P3	Enables print / whole word recognition	Printed / written word (often names) is recognised by child.	E27- Elijah looked at an adult's list of children's names, reading each one.
P3	Recall	Provokes verbal recall of wording of text from previous readings.	B26 – Ben recalled previous reading of 'Fireworks Poem' and joined in some words and phrases.
P3	Associations	Connects child to their values - Child makes statement about text e.g. 'I like' to express something about them in relation to what they value	B24 – Kawasaki logo and motorbike image enabled Ben to talk with authority on the subject of motorcycle racing.

P3	Constrains	In child's view, text is inaccessible.	F41 – Need for password on PC constrained Fynn's activity.
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Child as text producer			
P3	Enable skill / knowledge demonstration	Materials enable child, at least in part, to showcase knowledge and skill and a writer.	A28 – Design of writing prompts book enabled Anya to express her knowledge of the Peppa Pig cartoon, demonstrate her letter identification skills and engage in meaningful writing.
P3	Requires phoneme / grapheme knowledge	Requires child to draw on existing alphabetical knowledge in text creation	AM40 – 'I spy' activity in comic required Amir to recognise letters and hear sound to participate with his sister in the game.
P3	Requires adult mediation	Text production requires adult mediation / scaffolding / support for text production.	B20 – Group writing activity, Nikita guided Ben through constructing letter shape to enable him to produce letter of peer's name.
P3	Engenders status / self-positioning	Enables child to use the text making process and resultant text to take up more inclusive position in AS.	A29 – Anya wrote Amir's name on his model for him, explaining to him how it was done.
P3	Prompts inward transaction with text	Enables independence in creating text, quietly absorbed in activity without social interaction, creating meaning for self.	B15b – Ben made letter type shapes on his paper, his gaze directed toward his paper, seemingly lost in thought, unaware of social interaction around him.
P3	Intertextuality	Text under construction is discernibly based on other, recently or simultaneously experienced text.	AM23 – Amir explained that he wanted to write the names of the 'Paw Patrol' characters, 'like in the book'.
P3	Limits self-belief	Text creation is limited by child's sense of own ability – intention for text creation is discernible – but unfulfilled due to perceived lack of capability.	E27 – Elijah wanted his friend's name on his page, but the adult insisted he attempt the writing himself first before she would help, causing a dispute.
P3	Evokes expression of meaning	Enables child to express outwardly, verbally or with gesture the meaning of the text – translating text's meaning for others.	F21a, b and c.- Fynn approached peers and adults to explain that his text said, 'me love Mummy'.
P3	Mandatory activity	Uses materials and creates texts as directed by adult	B20 – Ben wrote letters on his whiteboard when instructed to do so by practitioner.

Coding Domain 2 – Identities

Codes generated in relation to sub-question 2a - Nature of the literate identities the child enacts			
Sub-domain	Code	Code definition (and discernible indicators)	Example
I1	Expression of competencies	Makes own competencies (actual or inflated) known to others through verbal / gestural expression or demonstration. (Draws attention overtly or covertly to own activity)	B15b – Ben attracted his brother's attention to his text by saying, "look what me done".

I1	Expression of knowledge	Makes knowledge known to others through verbal or gestural expression. (expresses thoughts in facts and absolutes)	AM4 – Amir explained to the group about library books, “you have a card and you have to take it back on Sunday”.
I1	Expression of ideas	Expresses, verbally or gesturally, own ideas or interpretations of situation or text for purpose of self-positioning. (expresses thoughts in possibilities or interpretations)	A10 – In group read-aloud, Anya contradicted story line of the ‘Very Bust Spider’ suggesting the spider, “could have answered while spinning her web”.
I1	Expression of self	Expresses, spontaneously or in response, own preferences, associations or interests with intention of self-positioning. (Expresses how self is distinct from others ‘othering’ oneself)	AM31 – Looking at a board book of ‘festivals’ in the roleplay area, Amir said “I have that at home, that’s Eid”.
I1	Expression of ‘can’t do’	Expresses that s/he does not have capabilities to do task or activity. (“ I can’t” statements)	AM21 – Practitioner encouraged Amir to attempt to write his own name, he responded, “no, you do it for me”.
I1	Leads social interaction	Leads (or attempts to) the pace and direction of social interaction	E17 – Elijah took control of page turning from Nikita with the Dinosaur book saying, “look, I show you” (finding a particular dinosaur).
I1	Directs / instructs	Gives others directions or instructions regarding their actions in given situation.	A50 – Gave Lucy clear instructions for colouring saying, “you use that red one, and you have to stay in the lines”.
I1	Possession of materials / text	Takes possession of resources, text or materials in order to establish, mediate or enact identity or position in group.	AM23 – After waiting patiently, Amir placed the writing prompts book carefully to one side of him and announced, “I’m going to write Chase”.
I1	Agency	Take action to take up fuller position in AS / be acknowledged or recognised in social group or to enhance participation.	F9 – Fynn took the book from the practitioner, turning back to page of interest, he said, “look, I’ll show you” then explained his thinking.
I1	Rejects / challenges ideas or views	Expresses disagreement to ideas expressed by others or suggests alternative possibilities.	F27 – When Nikita suggested that boys can also like ‘Elsa’ (from Disney’s Frozen), Fynn responded “me don’t”.
I1	Shows creations or achievements	Seeks opportunity to show own creations or demonstrate skill to other with pride.	A32 – Lucy showed interest in Anya’s text, so she carefully reopened her envelope to show Lucy the ‘card’ and ‘bracelet’ that she had made, pointing out each of the letters she had written.
I1	Offers feedback	Comments on the activities of others, suggesting improvements, alternatives or extension.	E9 – When the practitioner reads-aloud Goldilocks in Polish, Elijah said “No, no, read, you need to read it”.
I1	Ignores	Intentionally ignores another’s attempts to attract attention or elicit a response.	E46 – Elijah’s sister insisted that he is doing the comic activity incorrectly, he ignored her, continuing with his own course of action.
I1	Conforms willingly	Appears pleased to or takes pride in following adult direction or routines / rules to position self as ‘good’ or to please others.	A2 – Anya followed the adult’s instructions and modelling to join in with actions for storytelling in group read-aloud.
I1	Conforms reluctantly	Follows adult direction or routines / rules but appears or expresses displeasure at doing so.	E2 – Elijah tried to move forward in the group to explore story props but returned when directed by practitioner.

I1	Refuses to conform	Refuses to comply with adult direction or routine / rules, or strongly challenges doing so.	B20 – Practitioner-led group session, Ben attempted copying the written letter onto his whiteboard, but refused to join in singing the accompanying song.
I1	Follows peers / siblings	Follows the verbal or gestural directions of peers / siblings or follows their lead in activities.	F12 – Book sharing with peer, Fynn accepted peer removing his hand from page, then repeated peer's comments about illustration.
I1	Challenges peer / sibling leadership	Challenges or refuses to follow directions or instructions placed by peers or siblings.	B8 – Ben responds to peer demand with a firm “no” and held the book up, creating a barrier between himself and his peer.
I1	Challenges positive positioning	Refutes suggestions from others of being ‘clever’, ‘able to’ or other positive attributes.	B20 – When practitioner praised Ben for his attempt at writing on the whiteboard, he quickly took his tissue and rubbed it off.
I1	Withdraws	Removes self from AS, or remains physically in AS but retreats into own activity – internalised participation.	A49 – At nursery Anya used Goldilocks props to ‘make porridge’ quietly telling the Goldilocks story to herself, seemingly unaware of activity unfolding around her.

Codes generated in relation to sub-question 2b – Nature of the social positions made available to the child?

Sub-domain	Code	Code definition (and discernible indicators)	Example
Adults' actions			
I2	Initiates interest	Adult spontaneously shows interest in child's activity	A52 – When Anya showed Lucy her Vtech Lucy said, “so show me what you have to do”.
I2	Maintains interest	Adult sustains interest in child's activity and works to maintain the interaction / communication	F9 - As Fynn shared his own book with the group, the practitioner affirmed his comments, “ah I see he's mending the toys” then invited an extension “carry on Fynn, what happens here”.
I2	Fails to respond	Does not respond or ignores child's interactive / communicative initiations or presence in AS. Intentionally or unintentionally	AM13 – Amir contributed to a dinosaur conversation, correctly naming a stegosaurus, but the practitioner was in dialogue with Elijah and was unaware.
I2	Offers task support	Offers to help child complete a task or elements of activity, waiting for child's response before helping.	F40 – When Fynn start up his tablet to play on an app at home, his mother asked, “can you find it, do you need me?”.
I2	Encourages task completion	Encourages child to complete task or activity independently when struggling or asking for help.	B20 – Group letter writing activity, practitioner acknowledged Ben's first brief attempt, then encouraged him to complete, she said “that's it, now down, and up, and round, that's it”.
I2	Encourages child to lead	Encourages child to lead interaction, make choices and express views and preferences for activity. Takes action to promote child's agency. (Adult takes more passive role – prompts choice)	A5 – Anya was invited to take the ‘reader’ role in a group session with a familiar book, the adult said, “there's the storybook and the props, so you can tell us the story today, over to you”.
I2	Controls interaction	Adult makes choices and dictates how interaction and activity proceeds. Actions reduce child's agency and volition.	F21c – When Fynn tried to retrieve his text from the drawer, the practitioner held it and said, “I want you to tell me about it, what does it say?”

I2	Adult interactions with peers / siblings	Adult's interactions with peers or siblings indirectly position focal child – who seems aware of or reacts to differential positions of self and peer / sibling. (Adult praises peer's / sibling's capabilities)	E17 / AM13 – Practitioner focused attention on Elijah, meaning that Amir's participation was only briefly acknowledged with eye contact and a nod, before she returned to dialogue with Elijah.
I2	Praise	Spontaneously and openly praises child for effort, ability or accomplishments	E3 – Elijah enthusiastically joined in the repetitive refrains of the read-aloud, the practitioner smiled and nodded at him each time.
I2	Appreciation	Offers thanks and appreciation to child for their actions or behaviours.	A15 – After Anya read the 'Hungry Caterpillar' Lucy said, "thank you for reading me that story, that was beautiful".
I2	Challenges or reprimands	Challenges or reprimands child for their actions or behaviours	B15b – When Ben started to draw on his brother's arm, Lucy said "umm, not on Jake please Ben" and his mother added, "Ben stop".
I2	Challenges expressed knowledge	Adult questions or challenges the accuracy of the knowledge expressed by the child.	AM4 – When Amir suggested that the characters in the book were having a picnic, the practitioner said, "well it says here that they're looking for a place for a picnic, so there not quite ready yet".
I2	Individually selects	Selects child from group to participate individually or take a turn in group activity	B32 – During a 'Helicopter Stories' session Ben was chosen by the practitioner to enact his story.
I2	Genuine questions	Asks question to which adult does not know the answer and has genuine interest in child's views.	B24 – In dialogue about 'dirt bikes', Lucy asked, "so can they all race on the dirt track?".
Peer / sibling action			
I2	Agreement	Expresses agreement with or affirms child's position or views.	AM4 – Peer supported Amir's assertion regarding the book character names (Iggle Piggle and Macca Pacca) by saying "yeah, yeah, it is Macca Pacca".
I2	Disagreement	Contests, challenges or disagrees with child's position or views	B15b – When Ben announced that he had written his sister's name, his sister challenged him saying, "That's not my name, that's my daddy's name".
I2	Imitation	Imitates or copies (not in jest) the child's actions, ideas or approaches to activity.	A16 – As Anya dramatically enacted the story of 'Little Rabbit Foofoo' another child watched her closely and copied her enactments.
I2	Request to join	Make request to join child's activity	E42 – As Elijah looked through a comic, a peer approached and said, "Can I see, turn back" and joined in the evolving dialogue.
I2	Peer Leadership	Peer / sibling takes lead in social interaction – accepted by focal child.	AM40 - Amir's sister took on the role of his 'teacher' whilst helping him with an activity in a comic. She demonstrated letter formation and said "Look, do it like this. This will get you ready for reception".
I2	Invitation	Invites child to join their activity.	F27 – Peer tapped Fynn to draw his attention to the Peppa Pig page of the writing prompts books saying, "Look Peppa Pig".

I2	Positive acknowledgement	Acknowledges or positively comments on child's ability or achievements.	B20 – Peer noticed that Ben has written the letter D and said “Look, Ben done my letter too!”
I2	Complaints	Complains to adult about child's actions or behaviours.	AM23 – When Amir was using the ‘writing prompts’ book, a peer complained to the teacher that he was not sharing.
Environment			
I2:	Enables existing knowledge	Materials / text prompts or enables recall and expression of existing knowledge.	A10 – Selection of familiar / popular storybooks were freely available at the nursery setting. Anya was able to select one with which she was familiar and ‘read’ it to Lucy.
I2	Environmental constraint	Design of environment or inaccessibility of material constrains participation.	AM44 – Whilst Amir used the Smartboard to play a size matching game, another child repeatedly touched the screen meaning that Amir's selection did not register and he could not complete the activity.
I2	Social / Peer / Group Constraint	Interactions in AS or actions and behaviours of other prevent child from participating fully. Actions of others exclude child from activity – intentionally or unintentionally	AM9 – A group of children and a practitioner were enacting the ‘Bear Hunt’ Story. Amir could not find a space in the circle and sat on the periphery, unable to see the book.

Coding Domain 3 – Affective relations

Codes generated in relation to sub-question 3a – How is the child affected through relations in the activity setting?			
Sub-domain	Code	Code definition (and discernible indicators)	Example
A1	Excitement	Involvement in activity causes excitement. (Posture lifts – breaths in – smiles – intonation raised – tenses body)	E17 – When Elijah found a match between his dinosaur model and the illustration in the book, he put his hands in the air, stamped his feet and cheered.
A1	Enjoyment	Positively engaged in activity, content but less stimulated. (Relaxed posture – smiles – gaze mostly toward activity)	A43 – Anya giggled at Lucy's comments about M&Ms.
A1	Intense interest / involvement	High levels of interest and involvement in activity, with text or materials. (Looks intently - leans close toward activity - examines small details – narrowed eyebrows – concentration)	E46 – Elijah was focused on finding particular dinosaurs in his comic, and circling corresponding illustration, he leant over the page, examining it, seemingly unaware of social interaction unfolding around him.
A1	Moderate interest / involvement	Moderate levels of interest, some active involvement in activity, with text or materials	A10 – Beginning of a group read-aloud of a familiar book, Anya looked toward the book. As another practitioner passed by, Anya's gaze followed and she waved, then turned her attention back to the book.
A1	Disinterest	No interest in, or loses interest in and disengages with activity, text or materials. (Looks around – attention directed elsewhere – leaves activity if able)	E9 – After 5 minutes of a story read-aloud in Polish, Elijah's gaze moved to the window, then he began exploring the sand in his boots.

A1	Curious	Shows curiosity – observes intently or explores / investigates affordances and properties of text, materials or activity. (Disrupts current course of action)	B15a – Ben examines Lucy’s fountain pen, tipping it back and forth watching the ink flow from one end to the other. He made some marks, then again looked closely at the nib.
A1	Self-conscious	Appears self-conscious, uncomfortable or embarrassed in social situation. (Retreats – closed posture)	F27 – When asked if he like Disney Princesses, Fynn looked down and shook his head.
A1	Pressured	Happenings in AS / interpersonal interactions cause child to feel under pressure (to some extent) to perform or to give response that may be judged.	AM5 – Having affirmed that he had previously read the book ‘Gorilla’ at home, Amir was ‘put on the spot’ when the practitioner asked him the name of the protagonist – he looked up and to the right and said “ummm, Goldilocks”.
A1	Disheartened / Sadness	Appears deflated, upset or disappointed by happenings in, or outcome of activity. (Tearful - lowered posture and facial expression)	F6 - Part 5 – Fynn couldn’t find a ‘Spiderman’ book at library – he sat with a ‘Dr Who’ book, tuned pages but with gaze directed to floor, he bit his bottom lip, shoulders were hunched.
A1	Accomplished / pride	Shows sense of accomplishment or pride with own actions, behaviours, achievements, creations or ideas.	A15 – When praised after reading the Hungry Caterpillar book aloud, Anya pointed to herself with both index fingers, smiled and said “that’s how I do it”.
A1	Anxious	Appears unsure, nervous or anxious about happenings in AS. (Stays on periphery – seeks adult – closed in posture – lowers chin)	AM23 – Following a dispute with two peers over resources, Amir looked around, (expression appears ‘concerned’), he made eye contact with adult and pointed to resources in question.
A1	Concerned	Appears concerned or is grappling with uncertainty that happenings in AS might not unfold to their liking. (Heightened interest in what is happening / others’ actions anticipating what may unfold.)	B26 – Group poetry session, each child took a turn to select a ‘firework’ illustration to add to the display. As illustrations depleted Ben said, “I haven’t had a turn yet”.
A1	Persists	Preservers, when facing challenges, endeavours to achieve intended outcome.	E42 – Elijah struggled to manipulate the pen lid to place it on the top end of the pen. Took four attempts, each time it fell off, he retrieved it and tried again.
A1	Frustration	Appears frustrated, annoyed or angry that happenings in AS, or outcomes are not as intended. (Tenses body and facial muscles – stamps feet – cries / growls /shouts)	E27 – When the adult refused to write the name Elijah requested, suggesting he should try himself, he stamped his feet, made a ‘whining’ sound and said “no, no you try”.
A1	Inspired	Happenings in AS inspire child to take action or explore activity or materials.	AM13 – When Amir noticed Elijah and Nikita cheering on matching a model dinosaur and illustration, he quickly got up, found a model dinosaur and returned to the AS.
A1	Linking experiences	Happenings in AS create links with child’s existing knowledge or previous experience.	F9 – Fynn used images from the ‘Toy Story’ movie, in a book to recall the narrative. Pointing to image he said, “Him is a really really bad boy”.
A1	Enlightenment	Happenings in AS engender new or adapted realisations or understandings. Eureka moments. (Momentarily stops to assess – gaze fixed on activity / materials – possibly comments)	AM49 – Typing on a ‘word’ document – Amir made connection between a differently formed upper case letter (on keyboard) and lower case letter (on screen) in his name, he said “look it is [?]”.

A1	Satisfied	Quietly content with the outcome of situation, the interaction or own actions or creations.	F41 – Fynn used arrow keys on keyboard to complete a game on PC. When the star popped up on the screen, Fynn went slightly rigid and quietly said “yes’.
A1	Amusement	Child finds happenings in AS funny / amusing (Laughs / giggles)	A15 – When reading the Hungry Caterpillar story, Anya laughed at Lucy’s enactment of the caterpillar having a stomach ache.
A1	Disgruntled	Behaviours signify sense of mild discontentment with situation.	AM23 – Whilst organising his resources at the WW, another child took his ‘pen pot’. Amir looked at her and frowned, before selecting one pen from the pot.
A1	Self-worth	Appears to be experiencing feelings of belonging, social connection with AS, positive sense of own significance to others.	F12 – When Fynn and a peer were looking at a book together, they copied each other’s comments and Fynn looked at the other child and said “we’re best friends aren’t we”.
A1	Self-assured	Speaks or acts with authority – seemingly having confidence in own position and knowledge.	A52 – The verbal instruction on the ‘vtech’ instructed Anya to find the letter W, she responded “that’s easy” whilst pressing the correct key.

APPENDIX L: EXAMPLE OF RESEARCHER – PRACTITIONER JOINT REVIEW OF DATA

(audio recorded 29/08/2018)

Data Item – A52 – Anya at home –Vtech electronic game.		
Mariana	Lucy	
Overview Wow she can identify what is a letter and what is an arrow, and she's happy to explain that to you. She's really confident because she's in control, at nursery then, she was still unsure, but here she's in control but she's allowing you to interact with her. She went quiet when she couldn't do something, but she wanted to show you her knowledge, but I don't think she was worried about not being able to do it. She had that self-knowledge about what she could do and what she couldn't do so I don't think she was worried about it. She's so much more confident there at home than she was at Nursery at this point.	Overview Intention to inform me about her Vtech – given space to do so. On beginning activity parent adds that some games are too advanced for her – A adds that she can't spell this – using language of school literacy. Takes up 'expert' position – showing me how the Vtech works and demonstrates her knowledge about letters, but when challenged by the activity, parent changes game to one she can do, but Ala stresses that it is easy. Ala notices, almost takes for granted that she is centre of attention at this time, doesn't really have to work at position, but seems very content and confident with it.	
Mariana – Comments	Lucy - coding	
Excerpt 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She's a bit lost off • She wants to express her knowledge 	Excerpt 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 - self-assured • I1 – Expression of knowledge • I1- rejects ideas or views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 – knowledge expression - response • P1 – self-positioning • P3 Evokes 'talk through' • I2 A>C – Genuine questions • I2 A>C initiates interest
Excerpt 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She wants to please • Wants to learn • She's very self-aware • Really engaged 	Excerpt 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 – Persists, • A1 – Pressured • I1 – Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 – Seeks help, • P2 A>C Offers task support, • P2 –Adult response positive. • P3 Evokes 'talk through'
Excerpt 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assured, • Taking ownership, • Possibly she is saying not to interfere 	Excerpt 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 – Satisfied, • A1 – Self-assured, • A1 – accomplished / pride • I1 – Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I1 – expression of competencies • I1 – expression of knowledge • P1 – knowledge expression – initiated • P1 – seeks acknowledgement • P2 – Material enablers

Data Item A15 – Anya - Hungry Caterpillar		
Mariana – Overview	Lucy - Overview	
At this point she was really unsettled so it's nice to see this. Very engaged, telling whole story but looked for help when she needed to. It made her blossom because she knew she could do it. It's good that you just sat back and let her do it without interrupting. Actually, she kept telling adults this story for a few weeks. She's so confident because she knew that story well. There's none of the anxiety that we saw at other time when she first started.	Chose familiar story that she could use to demonstrate knowledge and participate fully in AS – take up central position – adult doesn't correct mistakes in text. Demonstrating knowledge and ability – acknowledged and valued as storyteller / reader by adult – but appears also motivated by need for closeness and attachment to feel secure. Attachment – emotional support – book mediating interaction to support her emotional needs??	
Mariana - comments	Lucy - Coding	
Excerpt 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She wants to engage the adult, • Seeking attention, • It's not challenging for her • Self-assured. 	Excerpt 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 – Self-worth • A1 – Enjoyment • A1 – Linking experiences • I1 – Agency • I1 – Leads interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 – Seeks social connection • P1 – Self-positioning • I2 A>C – Encourages child to lead • I2 A>C – Maintains interest • I2 E>C – Enables existing knowledge • P2 – Environmental enablers • P3 Recall
Excerpt 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using her knowledge • She wants to shine • Self- assured. 	Excerpt 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 – Self-assured • A1 – Enjoyment • A1 – Intense interest • A1 – Self-worth • I1 – Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I1 – Leads interaction • I1 – Expression of competencies • I2 A>C – Encourages child to lead • I2 A>C – Maintains interest • I2 E>C Enables existing knowledge • P3 - Recall
Excerpt 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She looks up, she's relaxed • Good that you're not interrupting • Sense of being listened too 	Excerpt 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 – Amusement • A1 – enjoyment • A1 – Self-worth • I1 – Agency • I1 – Possession of text • I2 A>C – Encourages child to lead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 – Seek help, • P3 - Recall • I2 A>C – Maintains interest • I2 A>C – Responds positively • I2 A>C Genuine questions • P2 – Adult responds positively. • P3 Familiar - Links experiences
Excerpt 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ah, she's worried now, she wants you to stay with her. 	Excerpt 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 – Moderate interest • A1 Anxious • I1 – Agency • I2 A>C Genuine questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I2 A>C – Maintains interest • I2 A>C – Responds positively • P2 – Adult responds positively • P1 – Seeks social connection • P3 Provides mediator

